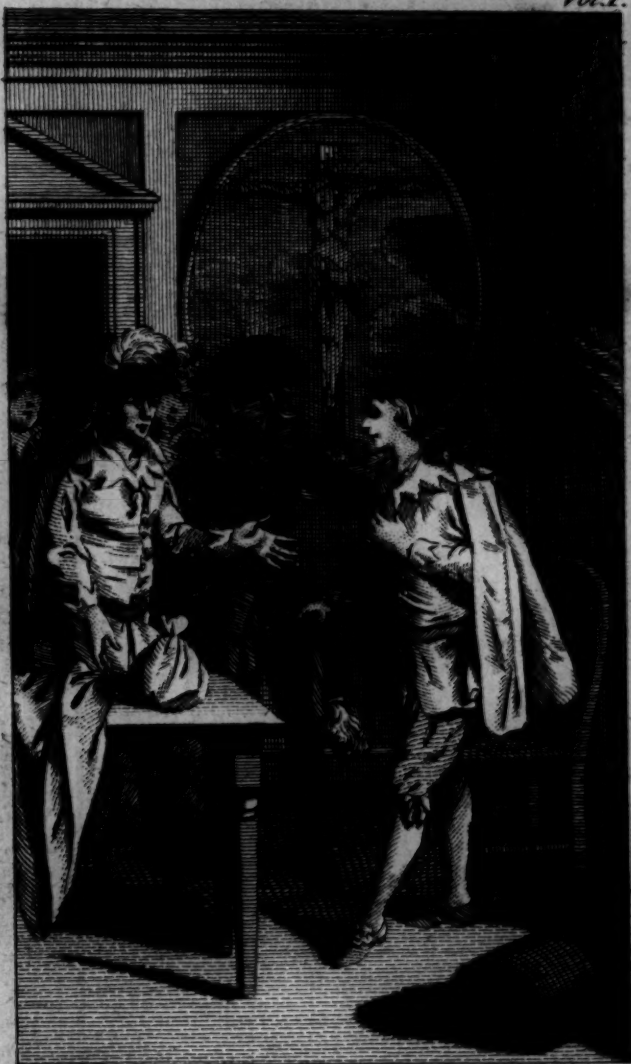


FRONTISPIECE *Vol. I.*



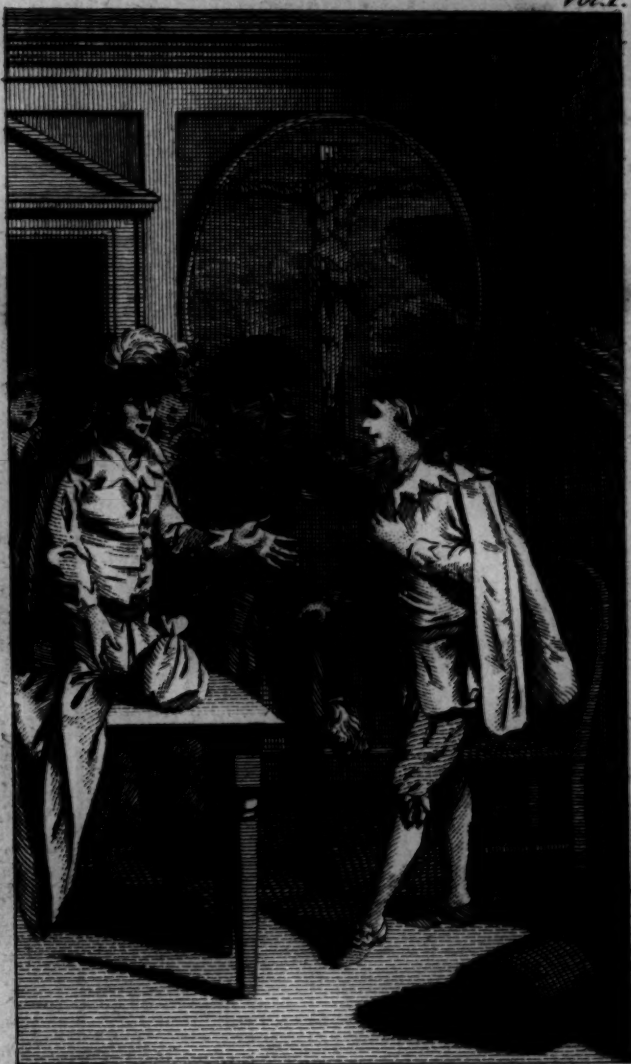
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Gil Blas receives a present from the Marchioness

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THE
ADVENTURES
OF
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Gil Blas of Santillane.

A NEW TRANSLATION,

By T. SMOLLETT, M. D.

AUTHOR OF RODERICK RANDOM.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOSEPH WENMAN,
No. 144, FLEET-STREET.

M,DCC,LXXX.

ADVENTURES

OF THE



AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

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T H E

A U T H O R ' s

D E C L A R A T I O N.

AS there are some people who cannot read, without making application of the vicious and ludicrous characters they meet with in works of this kind; I declare to these mischievous readers, that they will be to blame, if they apply any of the pictures drawn in this book. I publicly own that my purpose is to represent life as we find it: but God forbid that I should undertake to delineate any man in particular! Let no reader, therefore, assume to himself that which as properly belongs to others; lest, as Phædrus observes, he make an unlucky discovery of his own character. *Stulte nudabit animi conscientiam.* There are
16 A 3 physicians

physicians in Castille, as well as in France, whose practice consists in evacuating their patients a little too much ; and the same vices and peculiarities of disposition are to be seen every where. I confess that I have not always exactly observed the manners of the Spaniards ; and those who are acquainted with the disorderly lives of the players at Madrid, may reproach me with having described their irregularities with too much tenderness : but I thought it was necessary to soften them a little, that they might be the more conformable to the manners of our own country.

G I L B L A S

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

GENTLE reader, before thou hearest the history of my life, give me leave to entertain thee with a short story.

Two scholars, in their way from Pennafiel to Salamanca, being thirsty and fatigued, sat down by a spring they met with on the road. There, while they rested themselves, after having quenched their thirst, they perceived by accident, upon a stone that was even with the surface of the earth, some letters, already half effaced by time, and the feet of flocks that came to water at the fountain: having washed it, they read these words in the Castilian tongue: *Aqui est à encerrada el elma del Licenciado Pedrò Garcias*, "Here is interred the soul of the Licentiate Peter Garcias." The younger of the two students, being a pert coxcomb, no sooner read this inscription, than he cried with a loud laugh, "A good joke i'faith; Here is interred the soul—a soul interred!—Who the devil could be the author of such a wise epitaph!" So

faying, he got up and went away : while his companion, who was blessed with a greater share of penetration, said to himself, “ There is certainly some mystery in this affair : I’ll stay in order to unriddle it.” Accordingly, his comrade was no sooner out of sight, than he began to dig with his knife all around the stone ; and succeeded so well, that he got it up, and found beneath it a leathern purse, containing an hundred ducats, and a card, on which was written the following sentence in Latin, “ Whosoever thou art who hast wit enough to discover the meaning of the inscription, inherit my money, and make a better use of it than I have done.” The scholar rejoiced at his good fortune, placed the stone in its former situation, and walked home to Salamanca with the soul of the licentiate. Of what complection soever thou may’st be, friendly reader, thou wilt certainly resemble one of those two scholars : for if thou perusest my adventures, without perceiving the moral instructions they contain, thou wilt reap no harvest from thy labour : but if thou readest with attention, thou wilt find in them, according to the precept of Horace, profit mingled with pleasure.

THE ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS of Santillane.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

Of the birth and education of Gil Blas.

MY father, Gil Blas of Santillane, after having carried arms many years for the service of the Spanish monarchy, retired to the town in which he was born, where he chose a wife among the second-rate citizens, who, though she was no chicken, brought me into the world ten months after her marriage.—They afterwards removed to Oviedo, where my mother became a waiting-woman, and my father squire * to a lady : and as they had nothing but their wages to depend upon, I should have run the hazard of being very poorly educated, had it not been my good fortune to have a canon for my uncle, whose name was Gil Peres : he was my mother's eldest brother, as

* Squire, or gentleman usher, in Spanish, Escudero, is a person that waits on a lady. Formerly, decayed gentlemen were entertained by the nobility for this purpose ; they took their appellation from those eminent squires whose office was to carry the shield [in Spain called Escudo] of their master.

well

well as my god-father ; a little man, three feet and an half high, excessively fat, with his head sunk between his shoulders ; otherwise an honest priest, whose chief care was to live well ; that is, to make good cheer ; and his living, which was no lean one, furnished him with the means.

He carried me home to his house while an infant, taking charge of my education ; and I appeared so sprightly, that he resolved to cultivate my genius. With this view he bought for me an hornbook, and undertook (himself) to learn me to read ; a task no less useful to him than to me ; for, in teaching me my letters, he had recourse to his reading, which he had always neglected too much, and, by dint of application, enabled himself to read his breviary without hesitation ; a qualification he had never been possessed of before.—He had all the inclination in the world to instruct me in the Latin tongue also, because it would have been so much money saved to him ; but, alas, poor Gil Peres ! he had never in his life understood the rudiments of that language, and was perhaps (but this I do not vouch for certainty) the most illiterate canon of the whole chapter.—I have been told, indeed, that he had not obtained his benefice by his erudition, but owed intirely to the gratitude of some pious nuns, for whom he had acted the part of a zealous commissioner, and by whose influence the order of priesthood had been conferred upon him without examination.

He was therefore obliged to subject me to the birch of a school-master, and accordingly sent me to the house of doctor Godinez, who was reckoned the most expert flogger in Oviedo. I improved so well under his instructions, that in five or six years I understood a little Greeck, was a pretty good Latin scholar, and applying myself also to logic, began to argue apace ; I was so much in love with dispute, that I stopt passengers, known or unknown, and proposed arguments to them ; and sometimes meeting with Hibernian geniuses,

geniuses, who were very glad of the occasion, it was a good jest to see us dispute; by our extravagant gestures, grimaces, contorsions, our eyes full of fury, and our mouths full of foam, one would have taken us for bedlamites rather than philosophers.

By these means, however, I acquired the reputation of a great scholar in town; a circumstance that pleased my uncle extremely, as he foresaw that I should not be much longer an expence to him. — ‘Harkee, Gil Blas, (said he to me one day) thou art no longer a child, and it is high time for a brisk lad of seventeen, like thee, to push thy fortune in the world; I am determined to send thee to Salamanca, where, with such genius and learning, thou canst not fail of obtaining some good post; thou shalt have some ducats in thy pocket to bear thy expences on the road; and I will give thee my own mule, which thou may’st sell at Salamanca for ten or twelve pistoles, and live upon the money until thou shalt be settled to thy satisfaction.’

He could not have proposed any thing more agreeable to me: for I passionately longed to see the world: nevertheless, I had discretion enough to conceal my joy; and when the time of my departure arrived, affecting the most lively sorrow at leaving an uncle, to whom I owed so many obligations, the honest man was melted, and gave me more money than he would have done, could he have seen to the bottom of my heart. — Before I set out, I went to take leave of my father and mother, who enriched me with advice, exhorting me to pray to God for my uncle, to live inoffensively, to eschew evil, and by all means to refrain from stealing — After they had held forth a good while, they made me a present of their blessing, which was all I expected from them; and I, mounting my mule, bade adieu to Oviedo.

C H A P. II.

*Of his being grievously alarmed in his way to Pennaslor :
Of his conduct in that town ; with an account of a per-
son who supped with him.*

BEHOLD me then in the open field, clear of Oviedo, on the road to Pennaslor, master of my own conduct, of a sorry mule, and forty good ducats, exclusive of some royals which I had stolen from my much-honoured uncle.—The first thing I did was to let my beast go at discretion, that is, very gently ; and throwing the bridle on her neck, I emptied my purse into my hat, and amused myself in counting my money : my joy was excessive ; and as I had never seen so much cash before, I handled and gazed at it with insatiable delight.—I had reckoned it, perhaps, twenty times over, when, all of a sudden, my mule raising her head, and pricking up her ears, stopt in the middle of the highway. Imagining she was frightened at something, I looked about to see what was the matter, and perceived upon the ground an old hat, turned up, with a rosary of great beads in it ; at the same time heard a lamentable voice pronounce these words : “ Mr. Traveller, for God’s sake, have pity on a poor maimed soldier ; drop, if you please, a few bits into the hat, and you shall be rewarded in heaven.”—I turned up my eyes immediately on the side from whence the voice issued, and saw, at the root of a bush, about twenty or thirty paces from me, a kind of soldier, who, upon two cross sticks, supported the barrel of a carbine, in my apprehension longer than a pike, with which he seemed to take aim at me : at this apparition, which made me quake for the church’s money, I stopt short, and, pocketing my ducats in a great hurry, took out some rials, approached the hat, that was exposed for the reception of extorted charity, and dropt them into it, one after another, that the beggar might see how nobly I used him.—

Ho

He was satisfied with my bounty, and gave me a benediction for every kick that I bestowed on the sides of my mule, in order to get out of his reach; but the plaguy beast, regardless of my impatience, moved not a step the faster, having lost the power of galloping, by a long habit of carrying my uncle at her own leisure.

I did not look upon this adventure as a very favourable omen for my journey: I considered that I might meet with something still worse, before I should arrive at Salamanca; and could not help blaming my uncle's imprudence, for having neglected to put me under the direction of a carrier. This, to be sure, was what he ought to have done; but he imagined that, by giving me his mule, my journey would be the less expensive; and he had more regard to that consideration, than to the dangers I might be exposed to on the road.—In order therefore to repair his mismanagement, I determined (as soon as I should arrive at Pennafior) to sell the mule, and take the opportunity of a carrier for Astorga, from whence I could transport myself to Salamanca by the same convenience; for although I had never been out of Oviedo, I was not ignorant of the names of the towns through which I must pass, having informed myself of these things before I set out.

I arrived in safety at Pennafior, and halting at the gate of an inn that made a tolerable appearance, I no sooner alighted than the landlord came out, and received me with great civility; he untied my portmanteau with his own hands, and, throwing it on his shoulder, conducted me into a room, while one of his servants led my mule into the stable.—This innkeeper, the greatest talker of the Asturias, and as ready to relate his own affairs, without being asked, as to pry into those of another, told me that his name was Andrew Corcuelo; that he had served many years in the king's army, in quality of a serjeant; and had quitted the service fifteen months ago, to marry a

damself

damself of Castropol, who (though she was a little swarthy) knew very well how to turn the penny. He said a thousand other things, which I could have dispensed with the hearing of; but after having made me his confidant, he thought he had a right to exact the same condescension from me; and accordingly asked whence I came, whither I was going, and what I was.—I was obliged to answer, article by article, because he accompanied every question with a profound bow, and begged me to excuse his curiosity, with such a respectful air, that I could not refuse to satisfy him in every particular.—This engaged me in a long conversation with him, and gave me occasion to mention my design, and the reasons I had for disposing of my mule, that I might take the opportunity of a carrier.—He approved of my intention, though not in a very succinct manner; for he represented all the troublesome accidents that might befall me on the road; he recounted many dismal stories of travellers, and I was afraid he would never have done; he concluded at length, however, telling me, that if I had a mind to sell my mule, he was acquainted with a very honest jockey who would buy her. I assured him he would oblige me in sending for him; upon which he went in quest of him immediately with great eagerness.—It was not long before he returned with his man, whom he introduced to me as a person of exceeding honesty, and we went into the yard all together, where my mule was produced, and passed and repassed before the jockey, who examined her from head to foot, and did not fail to speak very disadvantageously of her. I own there was not much to be said in her praise; but, however, had it been the pope's mule, he would have found some defects in her. He assured me, that she had all the faults a mule could have; and, to convince me of his veracity, appealed to the landlord, who, doubtless, had his reasons for supporting his friend's assertions.—

“ Well (said this dealer, with an air of indifference) how

how much money do you expect for this wretched animal?" After the eulogium he had bestowed on her, and the attestation of signior Corcuélo, whom I believed to be a man of honesty and understanding, I would have given my mule for nothing; and therefore told him I would rely on his integrity; bidding him appraise the beast in his own conscience, and I would stand to the valuation. Upon this he assumed the man of honour, and replied, that in engaging his conscience I took him on the weak side: in good sooth, that did not seem to be his strong side; for, instead of valuing her at ten or twelve pistoles, as my uncle had done, he fixed the price at three ducats, which I accepted with as much joy as if I had made an excellent bargain.

After having so advantageously disposed of my mule, the landlord conducted me to a carrier, who was to set out next day for Astorga.—This muleteer let me know, that he would depart before day-break, and promised to wake me in time, after we had agreed upon the price, as well for the hire of a mule as for my board on the road; and when every thing was settled between us, I returned to the inn with Corcuélo, who, by the way, began to recount the carrier's history; he told me every circumstance of his character in town, and, in short, was going to stupify me again with his intolerable loquacity; when, luckily for me, a man of a pretty good appearance prevented my misfortune, by accosting him with great civility.—I left them together, and went on, without suspecting that I had the least concern in their conversation.

When I arrived at the inn I called for supper, and, it being a meagre day, was fain to put up with eggs; which while they got ready, I made up to my landlady, whom I had not seen before: she appeared handsome enough, and withal so sprightly and gay, that I should have concluded, (even if her husband had not told me so) that her house was pretty well frequented.

frequented.—When the amlet I had bespoke was ready, I sat down to table by myself; and had not yet swallowed the first morsel when the landlord came in, followed by the man who had stopt him in the street. This cavalier, who wore a long sword, and seemed to be about thirty years of age, advanced towards me with an eager air, saying, “Mr. Student, I am informed that you are that signior Gil Blas of Santillane, who is the link of philosophy, and ornament of Oviedo! Is it possible that you are that mirror of learning, that sublime genius, whose reputation is so great in this country!—You know not (continued he, addressing himself to the inn-keeper and his wife) you know not what you possess! You have a treasure in you house! Behold, in this young gentleman, the eighth wonder of the world!” Then turning to me, and throwing his arms about my neck, “Forgive (cried he) my transports! I cannot contain the joy that your presence creates!”

I could not answer for some time, because he locked me so close in his arms that I was almost suffocated for want of breath; and it was not till I had disengaged my head from his embrace, that I replied, “Signior cavalier, I did not think my name was known at Pennasflor.”—“How! known! (resumed he in his former strain) we keep a register of all the celebrated names within twenty leagues of us:—you in particular are looked upon as a prodigy; and I don’t at all doubt, that Spain will one day be as proud of you, as Greece was of her seven sages.” These words were followed by a fresh hug, which I was enforced to endure, though at the risk of strangulation. With the little experience I had, I ought not to have been the dupe of his professions and hyperbolical compliments: I ought to have known, by his extravagant flattery, that he was one of those parasites which abound in every town, and who, when a stranger arrives, introduce themselves to him, in order to fill their bellies at his expence; but my youth and

and vanity made me judge quite otherwise: my admirer appeared to me so much of a gentleman, that I invited him to take a share of my supper. "Ah! with all my soul (cried he), I am too much obliged to my kind stars for having thrown me in the way of the illustrious Gil Blas, not to enjoy my good fortune as long as I can! I have no great appetite (pursued he) but I will sit down to bear you company, and eat a mouthful, purely out of complaisance."

So saying, my panegyrist took his place right over-against me, and, a cover being laid for him, attacked the amlet as voraciously as if he had fasted three whole days: by his complaisant beginning I foresaw that our dish would not last long, and therefore ordered a second; which they dressed with such dispatch, that it was served just as we—or rather he—had made an end of the first.—He proceeded on this with the same vigour, and found means, without losing one stroke of his teeth, to overwhelm me with praises during the whole repast, which made me very well pleased with my sweet self.—He drank in proportion to his eating; sometimes to my health, sometimes to that of my father and mother, whose happiness in having such a son as me he could not enough admire.—In the mean time he plied me with wine, and insisted upon my doing him justice, while I toasted health for health; a circumstance which, together with his intoxicating flattery, put me into such a good humour, that, seeing our second amlet half devoured, I asked the landlord if he had no fish in the house. Signior Corcuélo, who, in all likelihood, had a fellow-feeling with the parasite, replied, "I have a delicate trout; but those who eat it must pay for the sauce:—'tis a bit too dainty for your palate, I doubt."—"What do you call too dainty? (said the sycophant, raising his voice) you're a wiseacre, indeed! know that there is nothing in this house too good for signior Gil Blas de Santillane, who deserves to be entertained like a prince."

I was pleased at his laying hold of the landlord's last words, in which he prevented me, who finding myself offended, said, with an air of disdain, "Produce this trout of yours, gaffer Corcuelo, and give yourself no trouble about the consequence."—This was what the inn-keeper wanted: he got it ready, and served it up in a trice. At sight of this new dish, I could perceive the parasite's eyes sparkling with joy; and he renewed that complaisance—I mean for the fish,—which he had already shewn for the eggs. At last, however, he was obliged to give out, for fear of accident, being crammed to the very throat: having therefore eaten and drank his bellyful, he thought proper to conclude the farce by rising from table, and accosting me in these words: "Signior Gil Blas, I am too well satisfied with your good cheer to leave you without offering an important advice, which you seem to have great occasion for: henceforth beware of praise, and be upon your guard against every body you do not know. You may meet with other people inclined to divert themselves with your credulity, and perhaps to push things still farther; but don't be duped again, nor believe yourself (though they should swear it) the eighth wonder of the world."—So saying, he laughed in my face, and stalked away. I was as much affected by this bite, as I have since been by misfortunes of far greater consequence.—I could not forgive myself for having been so grossly imposed upon; or rather, I was shocked to find my pride so humbled: "How! (said I to myself) has the traitor then made a jest of me? His design in accosting my landlord in the street was only to pump him; or perhaps they understand one another! Ah, simple Gil Blas! Go hang thyself for shame, for having given such rascals an opportunity of turning thee into ridicule! I suppose they will trump up a fine story of this affair, which will reach Oviedo, and doubtless do thee a great deal of honour; and make thy parents repent their having
thrown

thrown away so much good counsel on an ass: instead of exhorting me not to wrong any body, they ought to have cautioned me against the knavery of the world!’ Chagrined with these mortifying reflections, and inflamed with resentment, I locked myself in my chamber, and went to bed, where, however, I did not sleep; for, before I could close my eyes, the carrier came to let me know that he was ready to set out, and only waited for me: I got up instantly, and while I put on my cloaths, Corcuelo brought me a bill, in which, I assure you, the trout was not forgotten: and I was not only obliged to gratify his exorbitance, but I had also the mortification to perceive, while I counted the money, that the sarcastic knave remembered my adventure. After having paid sauce for a supper, which I had so ill digested, I went to the muleteer with my bags, wishing the parasite, the inn-keeper, and his inn, at the devil.

C H A P. III.

*Of the carrier's temptation on the road, and its consequence.
—How Gil Blas, in attempting to get out of the frying-pan, fell into the fire.*

I Was not the only person who travelled with the carrier, there being in company two children belonging to a gentleman at Pennaslor, a little strolling ballad-singer of Mondonedo, and a young tradesman of Astorga, who was bringing home a girl whom he had married at Verco. We became acquainted with one another presently, and every one, in a very short time, told whence he came, and whither he was going.—The new-married lady was so stupid and tawny, that I had no great pleasure in looking at her; but her youth and plumpness had a different effect upon the carrier, who resolved to make an attempt upon her inclinations: he spent the the whole day in projecting this noble design, the execution of which he deferred until we should arrive at our last stage, which

happened to be at Cacabelos. He accordingly made us alight at the first inn we came to, a house situated rather in the country than in the town, the landlord of which he knew to be a complaisant and discreet person.—He took care to have us conducted into a remote apartment, where he allowed us to sup in tranquillity; but when our meal was ended, he entered with a furious look, crying, “Blood and oons! I am robbed of one hundred pistoles, which I had in a leathern bag, and I must find them immediately, otherwise I will apply to the magistrate of the place, who is no joker in these matters, and have you all put to the rack, ’till such time as you confess the crime and restore the money.” Having pronounced these dreadful words with a very natural air, he went out, leaving us all in the utmost consternation.

As we were strangers to one another, none of us had the least suspicion of the finesse: for my own part I suspected that the poor ballad-singer had done the deed; and perhaps he had the same opinion of me. Besides, we were all raw fools, utterly ignorant of the formalities used in such cases, and believed in good earnest, that the process would be begun by putting us all to the torture.—Giving way therefore to our fear, we evacuated the room in a great hurry, some running unto the street, others flying into the garden, and every one betaking himself to his heels for safety. Among the rest the young tradesman of Astorga, as much scared as any of us at the thoughts of the torture, made his escape, like another Æneas, without incommoding himself with his wife.—It was then that the carrier, (as I have since learned) more incontinent than his mules, and overjoyed to see his stratagem succeed according to his expectation, went to the bride, boasted of his own ingenuity, and endeavoured to profit by the occasion:—but this Lucrece of the Asturias, to whom the villainous aspect of the tempter lent new strength, made a vigorous resistance, and screamed most powerfully. The patrol, which hap-

pened at that instant to pass by the house, that they knew deserved their attention, went in and demanded the reason of those cries: upon which the landlord, who sat singing in the kitchen, and pretended to nothing of the matter, was obliged to conduct the officer and his guard into the chamber of the person who made the noise — They arrived very seasonably, the chaste Asturian being quite exhausted; and the commander (who was none of the most delicate people in the world) perceiving what was the matter, gave the amorous muleteer a wooden salutation with the handle of his halbert, addressing him at the same time in terms as inconsistent with modesty as the action that suggested them. — This was not all: he apprehended the criminal, and carried him before the judge, together with his accuser; who, notwithstanding her disorder, would have gone of herself to crave justice for the outrage that was committed upon her. The magistrate having heard, and attentively considered the cause, found the defendant guilty, caused him to be stript and scourged in his presence; and ordered that, if the husband of the plaintiff should not appear before next day, she should be escorted to Astorga by two horsemen, at the charge of the delinquent.

As for me, more terrified, perhaps, than the rest, I got into the country, and crossing I don't know how many fields and heaths, and leaping all the ditches I found in my way, I arrived at last at the side of a wood, and was just going into it, with a view of concealing myself in some thicket, when, all of a sudden, two men on horseback appeared before me, and called, "Who goes there?" As my surprize hindered me from making immediate answer, they advanced, and each clapping a pistol to my throat, commanded me to tell who I was, whence I came, my business in that forest, and above all things, to hide nothing from them. — To these interrogations, the manner of which seemed to me equal to the rack with which the carrier had threatened us, I replied,

that I was a lad of Oviedo, going to Salamanca; recounted the alarm we had undergone, and confessed that the fear of being put to the torture had induced me to run away.—They burst into a loud laugh at this discovery, which manifested the simplicity of my heart; and one of them, “Take courage, friend; come along with us, and fear nothing: we will put thee in a place of safety.” So saying, he made me get up behind him, and then we retreated into the wood.

Though I did not know what to make of this encounter, I did not presage any thing bad from it; for (said I to myself) if these people were thieves, they would have robbed, and perhaps murdered me, at once: they must certainly be honest gentlemen, who live hard by, and who, seeing me in a panic, have pity on my condition, and carry me home with them out of charity.—But I did not long remain in suspense; for, after several windings and turnings, which we performed in great silence, we came to the foot of a hill, where we alighted; and one of the horsemen said to me, “This is our dwelling-place.” I looked around, but could perceive neither house, hut, nor the least appearance of any habitation: nevertheless, these two men lifted up a huge wooden trap-door, covered with earth and brambles, which concealed the entrance of a long shelving passage under ground, into which the horses went of themselves, like beasts that were used to it; whilst the cavaliers, taking the same path, made me follow them: then lowering the cover with cords fastened to the inside for that purpose, behold the worthy kinsman of my uncle Perez, caught like a mouse in a trap.

C H A P. IV.

A description of the subterranean habitation, and of what Gil Blas observed therein.

I NOW discovered my situation, and any one may easily believe that this discovery effectually dispelled my former fear: a terror more mighty, and better founded, took possession of my soul! I laid my account with losing my life as well as my ducats; and looking upon myself as a victim led to the altar, walked (more dead than alive) between my two conductors, who, feeling me tremble, exhorted me in vain to fear nothing.—When we had gone about two hundred paces, turning and descending all the way, we entered into a stable, lighted by two great iron lamps hanging from the arch above. Here I saw plenty of straw, and a good many casks full of provender: there was room enough for twenty horses; but at that time there were only the two that we brought along with us, which an old negro, who seemed vigorous for his years, was tying to a rack.—We went out of the stable, and by the dismal glimmer of some lamps, that seemed to enlighten the place only to shew the horrors of it, came to a kitchen, where an old cook-maid was busy in broiling steaks, and providing for supper.—The kitchen was adorned with all necessary utensils, and hard by there was a larder stored with all sorts of provision.—The cook (for I must draw her picture) was a person somewhat turned of sixty: in her youth the hair of her head had been red as a carrot; for time had not as yet so much bleached it, but that one might still perceive some shades of its primitive colour; she had an olive complexion, a chin pointed and prominent, with lips fallen in, a huge aquiline nose that hung over her mouth, and eyes that flamed in purple.

“ Well, Dame Leonardo (said one of the gentlemen

men, presenting me to this fair angel of darkness here's a young man we have brought for you."—Then turning to me, and observing me pale and dismayed, "Friend (said he) banish thy fear; we will do thee no harm—Having occasion for a servant to assist our cook-maid, we met with thee, and happy it is for thee we did: thou shalt here supply the place of a young fellow who let himself die about fifteen days ago: he was a lad of a very delicate complexion; but thou seemest to be more robust, and wilt not die so soon: indeed thou wilt never see the light of the sun again; but in lieu of that, thou shalt have good cheer, and a rousing fire. Thou shalt pass thy time with Lequarda, who is a very gentle creature, and enjoy all thy little conveniences. I will shew thee (added he) that thou hast not got among beggars." With these words he took up a flambeau, and bidding me follow him, carried me into a cellar, where I saw an infinite number of bottles and jars well corked, which (he told me) were filled with excellent wine. He afterwards made me pass through divers apartments, some of which contained bales of linnen, others of silks and stuffs: in one I perceived gold and silver, and a great quantity of plate in different cupboards—Then I followed him into a large hall, illuminated by three branches of copper, which also gave light to the rooms that communicated with it: here he put fresh questions to me; asked my name, and reason for leaving Oviedo; and when I had satisfied his curiosity in these particulars, "Well, Gil Blas (said he) since thy design in quitting the place of thy nativity was to obtain some good post, thou must certainly have been born with a caul upon thy head, because thou hast fallen into our hands—I have already told thee that thou shalt live here in affluence, and roll upon gold and silver: nay more, thou shalt be safe; for such is the contrivance of this retreat, that the officers of the holy brotherhood may come into the wood an hundred times without discovering it.

it. The entry is unknown to every living soul, except me and my comrades : perhaps thou wilt wonder how it could be executed without being perceived by the people in the neighbourhood ! know then, my lad, that this is not a work of our hands, but was made many years ago ; for after the Moors had got possession of Grenada, Aragon, and almost the whole of Spain, the Christians, rather than submit to the yoke of infidels, fled and concealed themselves in this country, in Biscay, and in the Aulturies, whither the valiant Don Pelagio retired : fugitives, and dispersed in small number, they lived in mountains and woods ; some lurked in caves, and others contrived many subterranean abodes, of which number this is one. Having afterwards been so lucky as to drive their enemies out of Spain, they returned into towns ; and since that time, their retreats have served for asylums to people of our profession. 'Tis true, indeed, the holy brotherhood * have discovered and destroyed some of them ; but there are still plenty remaining ; and (thank heaven) I have lived here in safety near fifteen years ; my name is Captain Rolando : I am chief of the company, and he whom thou sawest with me is one of my gang.'

CHAP. V.

Of the arrival of more thieves in the subterranean habitation, and the agreeable conversation that happened among them.

SIGNIOR Rolando had scarce done speaking, when six new faces appeared in the hall ; these were the lieutenant with five of the company, who

* The holy brotherhood in Spain, called la Santa Hermandad, was formerly an association to suppress robbers, in times of civil commotion ; and at this day is an establishment kept up through all the kingdoms and provinces of Spain for the same purpose.

returned loaded with booty, which consisted of two hampers full of sugar, cinnamon, pepper, dried figs, almonds and raisins; the lieutenant addressing himself to the captain, told him, that he had taken these hampers from a grocer of Benavento, whose mule he had also carried off. When he had given an account of his expedition to his superior, the pillage of the grocer was ordered into the store, and it was unanimously agreed to make merry. A table being covered in the great hall, I was sent back into the kitchen, where dame Leonarda instructed me in the nature of my office: and yielding to necessity (since my cruel fate had so ordained) I suppressed my sorrow, and prepared myself for the service of those worthy gentlemen.

My first essay was on the side-board, which I adorned with silver cups, and many stone bottles of that good wine which Signior Rolando had praised so much. I afterwards brought in two ragouts, which were no sooner served than the whole company sat down to eat. They began with a good appetite, while I stood behind, ready to supply them with wine; and acquitted myself so handsomely, that I had the honour to be complimented upon my behaviour. The captain recounted my story in a few words, which afforded a good deal of diversion, and afterwards observed that I did not want merit: but I was at that time cured of my vanity, and could bear myself praised without danger. Not one of them was silent on the subject; they said, I seemed born to be their cup-bearer; that I was worth an hundred of my predecessor; and although Dame Leonarda (since his death) had been honoured with the office of presenting nectar to these infernal gods, they deprived her of that glorious employment with which they invested me, like a young Ganymede succeeding an ancient Hebe.

A great dish of roast meat, served up after the ragouts, finished the repast of those gormandizing thieves,

thieves, who, drinking in proportion to their gluttony, soon became frolicksome, made a hellish noise, and spoke all together: one began a story, another broke a jest, a third shouted, a fourth sung; so that there was nothing but riot and confusion. At length Rolando, tired of a scene in which he was so little regarded, called (with a voice that silenced the whole company) "Gentlemen, I have a proposal to make: instead of stunning one another in this manner, by speaking all together, would it not be better to entertain ourselves like reasonable creatures? There is a thought come into my head: since the time of our association, we have never had the curiosity to know what family we are derived from, and by what train of adventures we have been severally led to embrace this way of life: as these things seem worthy to be known, let us, for our diversion, communicate to one another." The lieutenant, and the rest, as if they had something very entertaining to relate, embraced with great demonstration of joy, the proposal of their chief, who began his own history in these words:

"Gentlemen, you must know that I am the only son of a rich citizen of Madrid: the day of my birth was celebrated in the family by vast rejoicings; my father, pretty well stricken in years, was ravished at sight of an heir, and my mother undertook to suckle me at her own breasts: her father, who was still alive, was a good old man, who meddled with nothing but his beads, and recounted his own warlike exploits, having been many years in the army; so that becoming insensibly the idol of these three persons, I was incessantly dandled in their arms. Lest study should fatigue me in my tender years, I was allowed to spend them in the most childish amusements; my father observing that children ought not to apply seriously to any thing until time should have ripened the understanding. In expectation of this maturity, I neither learned to read nor write, but, nevertheless,

made good use of my time ; for my father taught me a thousand different games : I became perfectly acquainted with cards, was no stranger to dice ; and my grandfather filled my head with romantic stories of the military expeditions in which he had been concerned. He sung the same catches over and over, and when I had got ten or twelve lines by heart, by dint of hearing them repeated for three months together, my memory became a subject for admiration to my parents, who seemed no less satisfied with my genius. When profiting by the liberty I enjoyed of speaking what came uppermost, I used to interrupt their discourse with my nonsensical prattle—" Ah ! what a charming creature it is ! " (would my father cry, looking at me with inexpressible delight) while my mamma overwhelmed me with caresses, and my old grand-fire wept with joy.— I committed, in their presence, the most indecent actions with impunity : every thing was forgiven ; and, in short, they adored me. In the mean time, having attained my twelfth year, without being put to a school, a master was at length provided : but he received precise orders to instruct me without using any violence, being only permitted to threaten me sometimes, with a view of inspiring me with awe. This permission had not the most salutary effects upon me, who either laughed at his menaces, or, with tears in my eyes, went and complained to my mother and grandpapa of his barbarity. It was in vain for the poor devil to deny the accusation, he was looked upon as a tyrant, and my assertion always believed, in spite of his remonstrance. I happened one day to scratch myself, upon which, setting up my pipes, as if he had fied me, my mother came running in, and turned my master out of doors, though he protested and took heaven to witness, that he had not touched my skin.

In the same manner I got rid of all my preceptors, until such an one as I wanted presented himself : this

was a batchelor of Alcala : an excellent tutor for a person of fashion's child ! he was a lover of play, women and wine, consequently the fittest person in the world for me. The first thing he set about was to gain my affection, in which he succeeded, and, by these means, gained the love of my parents, who left me entirely to his management : indeed they had no cause to repent of their confidence ; for, in a very little time, he made me perfect in the knowledge of the world : by dint of carrying me along with him to the places he frequented, I imbibed his taste so well, that, except in Latin, I became an universal proficient ; and when I found I had no further occasion for his instructions, he went to offer them elsewhere.

If, during my childhood, I had lived pretty freely, it was quite another thing, when I became master of my own actions : I every moment ridiculed my parents, who did nothing but laugh at my sallies, which were the more agreeable the more insolence they contained. Mean while, I committed all kinds of debauchery, in the company of other young men of the same disposition ; and as our parents did not supply us with money sufficient to support such a delicious life, every one pilfered what he could, at his own home ; but that being also insufficient, we began to rob in the dark ; when, unfortunately, the corregidor got notice of us, and would have caused us to be apprehended, had we not been informed of his treacherous design. Upon which we consulted our safety in flight, and transferred the scene of our exploits to the highway. Since which time, gentlemen, God has given me grace to grow old in my profession, in spite of the dangers to which it is exposed."

Here the captain left off speaking, and the lieutenant, taking his turn, began with " Gentlemen, an education quite opposite to that of signior Rolando has, nevertheless, produced the same effect. My father was a butcher of Toledo, reckoned the greatest brute in the whole city, and, and my mother's disposition

position not much more gentle. While I was a child, they whipt me, as if it had been through emulation, at the rate of a thousand stripes a day: the least fault I committed was attended with the most severe chastisement; and it was in vain for me to ask pardon, with tears in my eyes, and protest that I was sorry for what I had done; far from being forgiven, I was often punished without cause; while my father belaboured me, my mother, (as if he had not exerted himself) instead of interceding for her child, frequently came to his assistance. This treatment inspired me with such aversion for my paternal habitation, that I ran away before I had attained my fourteenth year, and, taking the road of Arragon, went to Saragosa, subsisting on charity by the way. There I consoled myself with beggars, who led a pretty comfortable life; they taught me to counterfeit blindness, to appear lame, and afflict my limbs with fictitious ulcers, &c. In the morning, (like players, who disguise themselves, in order to appear upon the stage) we prepared ourselves for the different parts we intended to act, and every one ran to his post: in the evening we met again, and enjoyed ourselves all night, at the expence of those who had compassion on us in the day. Tired, however, of living among those wretches, and ambitious of appearing in a higher sphere, I associated myself with some knights of the post, who taught me a great many stratagems; but we were, in a very short time, obliged to quit Saragosa, having quarrelled with a certain justice, whose protection we had enjoyed. Every one took his own course: for my own part, I engaged myself in a company of brave fellows, who put travellers under contribution, and liked their manner of living so well, that, hitherto, I have never felt the least inclination to seek another: I am therefore, gentlemen, very much obliged to the barbarity of my parents; for, had they treated me a little less savagely, instead

of

of being an honourable lieutenant, I should have been, doubtless, at this day, a miserable butcher."

The next that spoke was a young thief, who, sitting between the captain and lieutenant, said, "Gentlemen, the stories we have heard, are neither so complicated, nor so curious as mine: I owe my being to a peasant's wife, who lived in the neighbourhood of Seville: three weeks after she had brought me into the world, (being still young, handsome and healthy) it was proposed to her, to nurse a man of quality's only son, lately born in Seville: this proposal my mother cheerfully accepted, and went to fetch the child, which being committed to her care, she no sooner brought it home to her house, than perceiving some small resemblance between us, she was tempted to make me pass for the infant of quality, in hopes that she should one day be well rewarded by me, for that kind office: my father, who was not more scrupulous than his neighbours, approved of the deceit; so that, after having made us exchange our swaddling-cloaths, the son of Don Rodrigo de Herrera was sent to another nurse, under my name, and my mother suckled me under his.

Notwithstanding all the fine things that are said of instinct and the force of blood, the little gentleman's parents swallowed the change with great ease: they had not the least suspicion of the trick that was played upon them; for, till I was seven years old, I was scarce ever out of their arms. Their intention being to make me a complete cavalier, all sorts of masters were provided; but I had no great inclination for the exercises I learned; and still less relish for the sciences they explained: I loved much better to game with the servants, for whose company I frequented the kitchen and stable: but play was not my predominant passion; for before I was seventeen years of age, I got drunk daily, seduced all the women in the house, but attached myself chiefly to a cookmaid, who seemed to merit my principal regard; she

she was a fat, jolly wench, whose pleasantry and sleekness pleased me much; and I made love to her, with so little circumspection, that Don Rodrigo himself perceived it. He reprimanded me sharply, reproached me with the baseness of my inclinations, and, lest the sight of this amiable object should render his remonstrances ineffectual, turned my princess out of doors.

I was disgusted at this piece of conduct, for which I resolved to be revenged: with this view, I stole his lady's jewels, and running in quest of my fair Helen, who had retired to the house of a washer-woman of her acquaintance, I carried her off, at noon-day, to the end that nobody might be ignorant of my passion. This was not all: I conducted her into her own country, where I married her in a solemn manner, that I might not only give Herrera the more vexation, but also afford such a worthy example to the children of noblemen. Three months after my marriage, I was informed of Don Rodrigo's death; a piece of news I did not receive with indifference; but repairing instantly to Seville, in order to demand his estate, I found things strangely altered! my mother, who was dead, had been silly enough, on her death-bed, to confess the whole affair, in presence of the curate of the village, and other credible witnesses; in consequence of which, the true son of Don Rodrigo was already in possession of my place, or rather, of his own; and had been received with the more joy, on account of their being dissatisfied with me. Wherefore, having nothing to expect from that quarter, and no longer feeling any inclination for my fat spouse, I joined some gentlemen of the road, with whom I began my expeditions."

The young robber having ended his story, another informed us, "That he was the son of a merchant at Burgos, and, prompted by an indiscreet devotion, had taken the habit, and professed a very austere order, from which, in a few years, he apostatized."

In

In short, these eight highwaymen spoke in their turns, and when I had heard them all, I was not at all surprized to find them together. The discourse was afterwards changed; they brought upon the carpet several projects for their next excursion; and after having come to a determination, got up from table, in order to go to rest. Having lighted their wax candles, and withdrawn, I followed Captain Rolando into his chamber, where, while I helped to undress him, 'Well, Gil Blas, (said he) thou seest how we live: we are always merry, and hatred and envy never get footing among us: we never have the least quarrel with one another, but are more united than a convent of monks: thou wilt, my child, (pursued he) lead a very agreeable life in this place; for I don't believe thee fool enough to boggle at living with robbers: eh! dost thou think there are any honefter people in the world than we! no, my lad, every one loves to prey upon his fellows: it is an universal principle, though variously exerted: conquerors (for example) seize upon the territories of their neighbours; people of quality borrow without any intention of repaying; bankers, treasurers, exchange-brokers, clerks, and all kinds of merchants, great and small, are not a whit more conscientious. As for your limbs of the law, I need not mention them; every body knows what they can do: I must own, however, that they are somewhat more humane than we; for we often put innocent people to death, and they sometimes save the lives of the guilty."

C H A P. VI.

Of the attempt of Gil Blas to make his escape, and the success thereof.

WHEN the captain of the thieves had made this apology for his profession, he went to bed, and I returned into the hall, where I uncovered the table, and put every thing in order: from thence I
went

went into the kitchen, where Domingo (so was the old negro called) expected me to supper. Though I had no appetite, I sat down with them; but as I could not eat, and appeared as melancholy as I had cause to be so, these two apparitions, equally qualified, undertook to give me consolation: "Why do you afflict yourself, child?" (said the old lady:) you ought rather to rejoice at your good fortune.—You are young, and seem to be of an easy temper: consequently would have been, in a little time, lost in the world: there you would have fallen into the hands of libertines, who would have engaged you in all manner of debauchery; whereas here your innocence finds a secure haven."—"Dame Leonarda is in the right, (said the old black-a-moor with great gravity) and let me add, the world is full of affliction: thank heaven, my friend, for having delivered thee, all at once, from the dangers, difficulties, and misery of life."

I bore their discourse with patience, because to fret myself would have done me no service: at last Domingo, having eaten and drank plentifully, retired into the stable; while Leonarda, with a lamp in her hand, conducted me into a vault, which served as a burying place to the robbers who died a natural death, and in which I perceived a miserable truckle-bed, that looked more like a tomb than a couch. "Here is your bed-chamber, (said she); the lad, whose place you have the good fortune to supply, slept here, as long as he lived among us; and now that he is dead, rests in the same place.—He slept away in the flower of his age; I hope you will not be so simple as to follow his example." So saying, she put the light into my hand, and returned into her kitchen; while I, setting the lamp upon the ground, threw myself upon the bed, not so much in expectation of enjoying the least repose, as with a view to indulge my melancholy reflection. "O heavens, (cried I) was ever destiny so terrible as mine!

mine; I am banished from the sight of the sun; and, as if it was not enough to be buried alive at the age of eighteen, I am moreover condemned to serve thieves, to spend the day among highwaymen, and the night among the dead!" I wept bitterly over these suggestions, which seemed to me—and were in effect extremely shocking. A thousand times I cursed my uncle's design of sending me to Salamanca: I repented of my flying from justice at Cacabelos, and even wished I had submitted to the torture.—But recollecting that I consumed myself in vain complaints, to no purpose, I began to think of some means by which I might escape. "What! (said I to myself) is it then impossible to deliver myself? the thieves are asleep, the cook-maid and negro will be in the same condition presently: can't I, while they are all quiet, by the help of my lamp, find out the passage through which I descended to this infernal abode? 'Tis true indeed, I don't think myself strong enough to lift the trap door that covers the entry; but, however, that I may have nothing to reproach myself with, I will try: my despair will, perhaps, supply me with strength, and who knows but I may accomplish it."

Having then projected this great design, I got up when I imagined Leonarda and Domingo were at rest; and taking the lamp in my hand, went out of the vault, recommending myself to all the saints in heaven.—It was not without great difficulty that I found again all the windings of this new labyrinth, and arrived at the door of the stable; where at last perceiving the passage I was in search of, I went into it, advancing towards the trap with as much nimbleness as joy:—but, alas! in the middle of the entry I met with a cursed iron grate fast locked, and consisting of strong bars, so close to one another, that I could scarce thrust my hand between them. I was confounded at the sight of this new obstacle, which I had not observed when I came in, the grate being then open: I did not
fail,

fail, however, to feel the bars, and examine the lock, which I even attempted to force; when, all of a sudden, I felt a-croſs my ſhoulders five or ſix hearty thwacks with a bull's pizzle! upon which I uttered ſuch a dreadful yell, that the whole cavern echoed with the ſound; and, looking behind me, perceived the old negro in his ſhirt, with a dark lanthorn in one hand, and the inſtrument of his execution in the other. “ Ah ha! Mr. Jackanapes, (ſaid he) you want to make your eſcape, hah? You muſt not imagine that I am to be caught napping.—I heard you all the while.—I ſuppoſe you thought the grate was open, didn't you? —Know, my boy, that henceforth thou ſhalt always find it ſhut; and that when we detain any body here, againſt his inclination, he muſt be more cunning than thou; if ever he gets off.”

In the mean time, two or three of the thieves, ſtarting out of their ſleep at the noiſe of my cries, and believing that the holy brotherhood was coming ſouſe upon them, got up in a hurry and alarmed their companions. In an inſtant all were a foot, and ſeizing their ſwords and carbines, advanced half naked to the place where Domingo chaſtiſed me; but they no ſooner underſtood the cauſe of the noiſe they had heard, than their uneaſineſs was changed into fits of laughter. —“ How, Gil Blas, (ſaid the apoſtate thief to me) thou haſt not been here ſix hours, and want'ſt to take thy leave of us already! ſure thou muſt have a great averſion to a retired life, hah! What would'ſt thou do, if thou wert a carthuſian friar? Go to bed; thou art quit for once, on account of the ſtripes Domingo has beſtowed on thee; but if ever thou ſhould'ſt make another effort to eſcape, by St. Bartholomew we will ſlea thee alive.” This ſaid, he withdrew; the other thieves retired into their apartments; the old negro, proud of his exploit, retired into his ſtable; and I ſneaked back to my Golgotha, where I ſpent the remaining part of the night in ſighs and tears.

CHAP. VII.

Of the behaviour of Gil Blas, when he could do no better.

DURING the first days of my captivity I was like to sink under the sorrow that oppressed me, and might have been said to die by inches; but at last my good genius inspired me with the resolution to dissemble: I affected to appear less sad than usual; I began to laugh and sing, tho', God knows, with an aching heart. In a word, I counterfeited so well, that Leonardo and Domingo were deceived, and believed that the bird was at last reconciled to his cage. — The robbers were of the same opinion: for I assumed a gay air when I filled wine for them, and mingled in their conversation, whenever I found an opportunity of acting the buffoon. This freedom, far from displeasing, afforded them diversion. “Gil Blas, (said the captain to me, one evening, while I entertained them in this manner) thou hast done well, my lad, to banish thy melancholy: I am charmed with thy wit and humour: I find people are not known all at once; for I did not think thou hadst been so sprightly and good-natured.”

The rest joined also in my praise, and appeared so well satisfied with me, that taking the advantage of this good disposition, “Gentlemen (said I) allow me to tell my mind: since my abode in this place I find myself quite another sort of a person than heretofore. You have divested me of the prejudices of education, and I insensibly imbibe your disposition: I have a taste for your profession, and a longing desire of being honoured with the name of your companion, and of sharing the dangers of your expeditions.” All the company approved of my discourse, and commended my forwardness; so that it was unanimously resolved to let me serve a little longer, in order to approve myself worthy, then carry me out in their excursions;

after

after which I should obtain the honourable place I demanded.

Well, then I was obliged to persist in my dissimulation, and exercise the place of cup-bearer still ; a circumstance that mortified me extremely : for my design in aspiring to the honour of becoming a thief, was only to have the liberty of taking the air with the rest, in hopes that one day I should be able to escape from them, in the course of their expeditions. This hope alone supported my life ; but nevertheless appeared so distant, that I tried more than once to baffle the vigilance of Domingo ; though it was never in my power, he being always so much upon his guard, that I would have defied an hundred Orpheus's to charm such a Cerberus. 'Tis true, indeed, I did not do all that I could have done to beguile him, lest I should have waken'd his suspicion ; for he had a hawk's eye over me, and I was obliged to act with the utmost circumspection, that I might not betray myself. I therefore resigned myself to my fate, until the time should be expired that was prescribed by the robbers for receiving me into their gang ; and this event I expected as impatiently as if I had been to be inrolled in a list of commissioners.

Heaven be praised ! in six months that time arrived ; when signior Rolando, addressing himself to his company, said, " Gentlemen, we must keep our words with Gil Blas ; I have no bad opinion of that young fellow, and I hope we shall make something of him : it is therefore my opinion that we carry him along with us to-morrow, to gather laurels on the highway, and usher him into the path of glory." The robbers agreed to their captain's proposal ; and to shew that they already looked upon me as one of their companions, from that moment dispensed with my service, and re-established dame Leonarda in the office she had lost on my account. They made me throw away my habit, that consisted of a sorry threadbare short calstock, and dressed me in the spoils of a gentleman

gentleman whom they had lately robb'd ; after which I prepar'd for my first campaign.

C H A P. VIII.

Gil Blas accompanies the thieves, and performs an exploit on the highway.

IT was in the month of September, when, towards the close of the night, I came out of the cavern in company with the robbers, armed like them, with a carbine, two pistols, sword, and bayonet, and mounted on a pretty good horse, which they had taken from the same gentleman whose dress I wore. I had lived so long in darkness, that when day broke I was dazzled with the light, which, however, soon became familiar to my eyes.

Having passed hard by Ponferrada, we lay in ambush in a small wood which bordered on the road to Leon. There we waited, expecting that fortune would throw some good luck in our way, when we perceived a dominican (contrary to the custom of these good fathers) riding upon a sorry mule : ‘ God be praised, cried the captain laughing) there’s the coup d’essai of Gil Blas ! — let him go and unload that monk, while we observe his behaviour.’ — All the rest were of opinion that this was a proper commission for me, and exhorted me to acquit myself handsomely in it.

Gentlemen (said I) you shall be satisfied : I will make that priest as bare as my hand, and bring hither his mule in a twinkling.’ ‘ No, no, (replied Rolando) ‘ he is not worth the trouble : bring us only the purse of his reverence ; that is all we expect of thee.’ For this purpose I sallied from the wood and made towards the clergyman, begging heaven all the way, to pardon the action I was about to commit. I would gladly have made my escape that moment ; but the greatest part of the thieves were better mounted than I, and had they perceived me running away, would have been at my heels in an instant, and entrapt

trapt me again in a very short time, or perhaps discharged their carbines at me; in which case I should have had nothing to brag of.—Not daring therefore to hazard such a delicate step, I came up with the priest, and clapping a pistol to his breast, demanded his purse. He stopt short to survey me, and without seeming much afraid, “Child, (said he) you are very young:—you have got a bad trade by the hand by times.” “Bad as it is, father, (I replied) I wish I had begun it sooner!”—“Ah! son, son (said the good friar, who did not comprehend the true meaning of my words) what blindness!—allow me to represent to you the miserable condition.”—O father, (said I, interrupting him hastily) a truce with your morals, if you please: my business on the highway is not to hear sermons: I want money.”—“Money? (cried he, with an air of astonishment) you are little acquainted with the charity of the Spaniards, if you think people of my cloth have occasion for money while they travel in this kingdom. Undeceive yourself;—we are every where cheerfully received, have lodging and victuals, and nothing is asked in return but our prayers: in short, we never carry money about us on the road; but confide altogether in providence.” “That won’t go down with me (I replied) your dependance is not altogether so visionary; for, you have always some good pistoles in reserve, to make more sure of providence. But, my good father (added I), let us ha’ done:—my comrades, who are in that wood, begin to be impatient; therefore throw your purse upon the ground instantly, or I shall certainly put you to death.”

At these words, which I uttered with a menacing look, the friar, seeming afraid of his life, said, “Hold! I will satisfy you then, since there is a necessity for it:—I see tropes and figures have no effect on people of your profession.” So saying, he pulled from underneath his gown a large purse of shamoy leather, which he dropt upon the ground, Then I told him, he might

continue his journey; a permission he did not give me the trouble of repeating; but clapped his heels to the sides of his mule, which belying the opinion I had conceived of her (for I imagined she was not much better than my uncle's) all of a sudden went off at a pretty round pace. As soon as he was at a distance I alighted, and taking up the purse, which seemed heavy, mounted again, and got back to the wood in a trice, where the thieves waited with impatience, to congratulate me upon my victory. — Scarce would they give me time to dismount, so eager were they to embrace me. "Courage, Gil Blas! (said Rolando) thou hast done wonders. — I have had my eyes on thee during thy expedition; I have observed thy countenance all the while, and I prophesy that thou wilt, in time, become an excellent highwayman." The lieutenant and the rest approved of the prediction, which they assured me I should one day certainly fulfil. I thanked them for the high idea they had conceived of me, and promised to do all that lay in my power to maintain it.

After they had loaded me with so much undeserved praise, they were desirous of examining the booty I had made. "Come, (said they) let us see what there is in the clergyman's purse." "It ought to be well furnished, (continued one among them) for those good fathers don't travel like pilgrims." The captain untied the purse, and, opening it, pulled out two or three handfuls of copper medals, mixed with bits of hallowed wax, and some scapularies *. At the sight of such an uncommon prey, all the robbers burst out into immoderate fits of laughter. "Upon my soul, (cried the lieutenant, we are very much obliged to Gil Blas, for having, in his coup d'essai, performed a theft so salutary to the company." This piece of wit brought on more. Those miscreants, and he in par-

* Scapularies are pieces of consecrated Ruff, worn by priests and nuns.

particular who had apostatized, began to be very merry upon the the matter; a thousand fallies escaped them, that too well denoted their immorality.—I was the only person who did not laugh, my mirth being check'd by the railiers, who enjoyed themselves at my expence. Every one having shot his bolt, the captain said to me, "In faith, Gil Blas, I advise thee as a friend, to joke no more with monks, who are generally speaking, too arch and cunning for such as thee."

C H A P. IX.

Of the serious affair that followed this adventure.

WE remained in the wood the greatest part of the day, without preceiving any traveller that could make amends for the priest. At last we left it, in order to return to our cavern, confining our exploits to that ludicrous event which still constituted the subject of our discourse, when we discovered, at a distance, a coach drawn by four mules, advancing at a brisk trot, and escorted by three men on horseback, who seemed well armed. Upon this Rolando ordered his troop to halt, and held a council; the result of which was, that they should attack the coach. We were immediately arranged according to his disposition, and marched up to it in order of battle. In spite of the applause I had acquired in the wood, I felt myself seized with an universal tremor, and immediately a cold sweat broke out all over my body, which I looked upon as no very favourable omen.—To crown my good luck, I was in the front of the line, between the captain and lieutenant, who had stationed me there, that I might accustom myself to stand fire all at once. Rolando, observing how much nature suffered within me, looked at me askance, saying with a fierce countenance, "Hark'ee, Gil Blas, remember to do thy duty; for if thou hang'st an arse, I'll blow thy brains out." I was too well persuaded that he would keep his word, to neglect this caution; for

which

which reason I thought of nothing now but of recommending my soul to God.

In the mean time the coach and horsemen approached, who, knowing what sort of people we were, and guessing our design by our appearance, stopt within musket-shot, and prepared to receive us; while a gentleman of good mien, and richly dressed, came out of the coach, and mounting a horse that was led by one of his attendants, put himself at their head, without any other arms than a sword, and a pair of pistols.—Tho' they were but four against nine (the coachman remaining on his seat) they advanced towards us with a boldness that redoubled my fear: I did not fail, however, though I trembled in every joint, to make ready to fire; but, to tell the truth, I shut my eyes, and turned away my head, when I discharged my carbine; and, considering the manner in which it went off, my conscience ought to be acquitted on that score.

I will not pretend to describe the action; for although I was present, I saw nothing, and my fear, in confounding my imagination, concealed from me the horror of the spectacle that occasioned it.—All I know of the matter is, that after a great noise of firing, I heard my companions shout, and cry, victory! victory! At that acclamation, the terror, which had taken possession of my senses, dissipated, and I saw four horsemen stretched lifeless on the field of battle. On our side we had but one man killed, and he was no other than the apostate, who had met with his deserts for his apostacy and profane jests upon the scapularies. The lieutenant received a wound in the arm; but it was a very slight one, the shot having only ruffled the skin.

Signior Rolando ran immediately to the door of the coach, in which there was a lady about four or five and twenty years of age, who appeared very handsome, notwithstanding the melancholy condition in which she was; for she had swooned during the engagement,

agement, and was not yet recovered. While he was bulied in looking after her, we took care of the booty, beginning with securing the horses of the killed, which frightened at the noise of the firing, had run away, after having lost their riders. As for the mules, they had not stirred, although the coachman (during the action) had quitted his place, in order to make his escape.— We alighted, and, unyoking, loaded them with some trunks we found fastened to the coach before and behind. This being done, the lady, who had not as yet recovered her senses, was, by order of the captain, taken out, and placed on horseback before one of the robbers that was best mounted; after which, quitting the high road, the coach, and the dead, whom we had stript, we carried off the lady, the mules and the horses.

C H A P. X.

In what manner the robbers behaved to the lady—Of the great design which Gil Blas projected, and the issue thereof.

IT was within an hour of day-break when we arrived at our habitation; and the first thing we did was to lead our beasts into the stable, where we were obliged to tie them to the rack, and take care of them with our own hands, the old negro having been, three days before, seized with a violent fit of the gout and rheumatism, that kept him a-bed, deprived of the use of all his limbs: the only member at liberty was his tongue, which he employed in testifying his impatience, by the most horrible execrations. Leaving this miserable wretch to swear and blaspheme, we went to the kitchen, where our whole attention was engrossed by the lady, and we succeeded so well as to bring her out of her fit: but when she had recovered the use of her senses, and saw herself in the hands of several men whom she did not know, she perceived her misfortune, and was seized with horror: The most lively sorrow, and dreadful despair, appeared in her eyes, which

which she lifted up to heaven, as if to reproach it with the indignities that threatened her: then giving way of a sudden to these dismal apprehensions, she relapsed into a swoon; her eyelids closed, and the robbers imagined that death would deprive them of their prey.—The captain, thinking it more proper to leave her to herself than to torment her with their assistance, ordered her to be carried to Leonarda's bed, where she was left alone, at the hazard of what might happen.

We repaired to the hall, where one of the thieves, who had been bred a surgeon, dressed the lieutenant's wound: after which, being desirous of seeing what was in the trunks, we found some of them filled with lace and linnen, others with cloaths, and the last we opened contained some bags full of pistoles; at sight of which the gentlemen concerned were infinitely rejoiced. This enquiry being made, the cook maid furnished the sideboard, laid the cloth, and served up supper.—Our conversation at first turned upon the great victory we had obtained; and Rolando addressing himself to me, "Confess, Gil Blas, (said he) confess that thou wast horribly afraid." I ingenuously owned that what he said was very true: but that when I should have made two or three campaigns, I would fight like a knight-errant; whereupon the whole company took my part, observing that my fear was excusable: that the action had been very hot; and that, considering I was a young fellow, who had never smelt gunpowder, I had acquitted myself pretty well.

The discourse afterwards falling upon the mules and horses we had brought into our retreat, it was agreed, that to-morrow before day we should all set out together, in order to sell them at Mansilla, which place, in all probability, the report of our expedition had not yet reached. This resolution being taken, we finished our meal, and returned into the kitchen to visit the lady, whom we found still in the same situation.—Nevertheless, though it was with

difficulty we could perceive any signs of life in her, some of the villains did not scruple to regard her with a profane eye, and even to discover a brutal desire, which they would have satisfied immediately, had not Rolando prevented it, by representing to them, that they ought at least to wait until the lady should get the better of that oppression of sorrow which deprived her of reflection. The respect they had for their captain restrained their incontinence, otherwise nothing could have saved the lady, whose honour death itself, perhaps, would not have been able to secure.

We left this unfortunate gentlewoman in the same condition in which we found her, Rolando contenting himself with laying injunctions on Leonora to take care of her, while every one retired into his own apartment. For my own part, as soon as I got to bed, instead of resigning myself to sleep, I did nothing but think of that lady's misfortune: I never doubted but she was a person of quality, and looked upon her situation as the more deplorable for that reason—I could not without shuddering represent to myself the horrors to which she was destined, and felt myself as deeply concerned for her as if I had been attached by blood or friendship. At last, after having bewailed her hard fate, I began to revolve the means of rescuing her honour from the danger in which it was, and of delivering myself at the same time from the subterranean abode.—I recollected that the old negro was not in a condition to move, and that, since his being taken ill, the cook-wench kept the key of the grate. This reflection warmed my imagination, and made me conceive a scheme, which I digested so well, that I began to put it in practice immediately, in the following manner:

Pretending to be racked with the cholic, I began with complaints and groans; then raising my voice, uttered dreadful cries, that wakened the robbers, and brought them instantly to my bed-side. When they asked what made me roar so hideously, I answered,

that

that I was tortured with a horrible cholic; and, the better to persuade them of the truth of what I said, ground my teeth, made frightful grimaces and contortions and writhed myself in a strange manner: then I became quiet all of a sudden, as if my pains had given me some respite.—In a moment after, I began again to bounce upon the bed, and twist about my limbs: in a word, I played my part so well, that the thieves, cunning as they were, allowed themselves to be deceived, and believed, in good earnest, that I was violently griped. In a moment all of them were busied in endeavours to ease me: one brought a bottle of usquebaugh, and made me swallow one half of it: another, in spite of my teeth, injected a glister of oil of sweet almonds; a third warmed a napkin, and applied it broiling hot to my belly.—I roared for mercy in vain: they imputed my cries to the cholic, and continued to make me suffer real pains, in attempting to free me from one I did not feel. At last, being able to resist them no longer, I was fain to tell them that the gripes had left me, and to conjure them to give me quarter. Upon which they left off tormenting me with their remedies, and I took care to trouble them no more with my complaints, for fear of undergoing their good offices a second time.

This scene lasted almost three hours; after which the robbers judging that day was not far off, prepared themselves to set out for Manilla: I would have got up to make them believe I was very desirous of accompanying them; but they would not suffer me to rise, Signior Rolando saying, “No, no, Gil Blas, stay at home, child; thy cholic may return.—Thou shalt go with us another time; but thou art in no condition to go abroad to-day.” I was afraid of insisting upon it too much, lest he should yield to my request; therefore I only appeared very much mortified, because I could not be of the party. This I acted so naturally, that they went out of the

cavern without the least suspicion of my design.— After their departure, which I had endeavoured to hasten by my prayers, I said to myself, “ Now, Gil Blas! now is the time for thee to have resolution; arm thyself with courage, to finish that which thou hast so happily begun.— Domingo is not in a condition to oppose thy enterprize, and Leonarda cannot hinder its execution.— Seize this opportunity of escaping, than which, perhaps, thou wilt never find one more favourable.” These suggestions filled me with confidence; I got up, took my sword and pistols, and went first towards the kitchen; but before I entered, hearing Leonarda, stopt, in order to listen. She was talking to the unknown lady, who, having recovered her senses, and understood the whole of her misfortune, wept in the utmost bitterness of despair.— “ Weep, my child, (said the old beldam to her) dissolve yourself into tears, and don’t spare sighs; for that will give you ease.— You have had a dangerous qualm; but now there is nothing to fear, since you shed abundance of tears.— Your grief will abate by little and little, and you will soon accustom yourself to live with our gentlemen, who are men of honour. You will be treated like a princess, meet with nothing but complaisance, and fresh proofs of affection every day.— There are a great many women who would be glad to be in your place.”

I did not give Leonarda time to proceed, but entering, clapped a pistol to her breast, and with a threatening look, commanded her to surrender the key of the grate. She was confounded at my behaviour, and, though almost at the end of her career, so much attached to life, that she durst not refuse my demand. Having got the key in my possession, I addressed myself to the afflicted lady, saying, “ Madam, heaven has sent you a deliverer; rise and follow me, and I will conduct you whithersoever you shall please to direct.” The lady did not remain deaf to my words, which made such an impression upon her,

her, that summoning up all the strength she had left, she got up, and throwing herself at my feet, conjured me to preserve her honour. I raised and assured her, that she might rely upon me; then taking some cords, which I perceived in the kitchen, with her assistance, I tied Leonarda to the feet of a large table, swearing that if she opened her mouth, I would kill her on the spot. I afterwards lighted a flambeau, and going with the stranger into the room where the gold and silver was deposited, filled my pockets with pistoles and double pistoles; and to induce the lady to follow my example, assured her that she only took her own. When we had made a good provision of this kind, we went towards the stable, which I entered alone, with my pistols cocked, firmly believing that the old negro, in spite of his gout and rheumatism, would not suffer me to saddle and bridle my horse in quiet; and fully resolved to cure him of all his distempers, if he should take it in his head to be troublesome: but, by good luck, he was so overwhelmed with the pains he had undergone, and those he still suffered, that I brought my horse out of the stable, even without his seeming to perceive it; and the lady waiting for me at the door, we threaded, with all dispatch, the passage that led out of the cavern, arrived at the grate, which we opened, and at last came to the trap-door, which we lifted up with great difficulty; or rather the desire of escaping lent us new strength, without which we should not have been able to succeed.

Day began to appear just as we found ourselves delivered from the jaws of this abyss; and as we fervently desired to be at a greater distance from it, I threw myself into the saddle, the lady mounting behind me, and following the first path that presented itself, at a round gallop, got out of the forest in a short time, and entered a plain, divided by several roads, one of which we took at random. I was mortally afraid that it would conduct us to Manilla,

where we might meet with Rolando and his confederates; but happily my fears was vain. We arrived at the town of Astorga, at two o'clock in the afternoon, where people gazed at us with extreme attention, as if it had been an extraordinary thing to see a woman on horseback, sitting behind a man. We alighted at the first inn we came to, where the first thing I did was to order a partridge and a young rabbit to the fire; and while this was a-doing, I conducted the lady into a chamber, where we began to converse with one another; for we had rode so fast that we had no discourse upon the road. She shewed how sensible she was of the service I had done to her, and observed, that after I had performed such a generous action, she could not persuade herself that I was a companion of the thieves, from whom I had rescued her. I told her my story, in order to confirm the good opinion she had conceived of me; and by that means engaged her to honour me with her confidence, and inform me of her misfortunes, which she recounted, as I shall relate in the following chapter.

C H A P. XI.

The history of Donna Mencia of Mosquera.

I WAS born at Valladolid, and my name is Donna Mencia of Mosquera. Don Martin, my father, after having spent almost his whole patrimony in the service of his king, was killed in Portugal, at the head of his own regiment, and left me so moderately provided, that though I was an only child, I was far from being a good match. I did not want admirers, however, in spite of the lowness of my fortune: a good many of the most considerable cavaliers in Spain made their addresses to me; but he who attracted my attention most, was Don Alvaro de Mello: he was indeed more handsome than any of his rivals; but more substantial qualifications determined me in his favour; he was endued with
prudence,

prudence, probity and valour, and withal the most gallant man in the world: when he gave entertainments, nothing could be more elegant, and when he appeared at tournaments, every body admired his vigour and address: I preferred him therefore to all others, and married him accordingly.

A few days after our marriage, he happened to meet with Don Andrea de Baesa, who had been one of his rivals, in a private place, where quarrelling with each other, they came to blows, and Don Andrea lost his life in the rencounter. As he was nephew to the corregidor of Valladolid, a violent man, and mortal enemy to the family of Mello, Don Alvaro knew he could not leave the city too soon: he returned home in a hurry, and while they saddled his horse, told me what had happened.—“ My dear Mencia, (said he) we must part! you know the corregidor: don't let us then flatter ourselves, for he will prosecute me with the utmost rancour; and as you are not ignorant of his credit, you know I cannot be safe in this kingdom.” He was so much penetrated with his own sorrow, and with that which he saw take possession of my breast, that he could say no more; and when I had prevailed upon him to furnish himself with some money and jewels, he clasped me in his arms, and during a whole quarter of an hour, we did nothing but mingle our sighs and tears. At last, being told the horse was ready, he tore himself from me; he departed, and left me in a condition not to be described. Happy! had the excess of my affliction, at that time, put an end to my life! what troubles and sorrows would my death have prevented! Some hours after Don Alvaro was gone, the corregidor being informed of his flight, ordered him to be pursued, and spared nothing to have him in his power: but my husband always baffled his pursuit, and kept himself secure, in such a manner that the judge found himself obliged to limit his revenge to the sole satisfaction of ruining the fortunes of a man whose blood he wanted to shed: his efforts

were not unsuccessful, all the effects of Don Alvaro being confiscated.

Left in a most afflicting situation, and having scarce wherewithal to subsist, I began to live a very solitary life, all my attendants being reduced to one maid: I spent the day in bemoaning, not an indigence, which I could have borne with patience, but the absence of my dear husband, whose condition I was utterly ignorant of, although he had promised, in his last melancholy adieu, that he would take care to inform me of his lot, into whatever part of the world his cruel fate should conduct him. Nevertheless, seven long years elapsed without my hearing the least account of him; and this uncertainty of his destiny, plunged me into an abyss of sorrow! At last I was told, that, in fighting for the king of Portugal in Fez, he had lost his life in battle: a man lately returned from Afric confirmed this report, assuring me, that he was perfectly well acquainted with Don Alvaro de Mello, had served with him in the Portugueze army, and even seen him fall in the action: to this he added many other circumstances, which persuaded me that my husband was no more.

At that time, Don Ambrosia Melia Carillo, marquis of Guardia, came to Valladolid: he was one of those old lords who, by the politeness and gallantry of their manners, make people forget their age, and continue still agreeable to the ladies: one day hearing, by accident the story of Don Alvaro; and being desirous of seeing me, on account of the picture which had been drawn of me; for the satisfaction of his curiosity, he engaged one of my relations, who carried me to her house. Seeing me there, I had the fortune to please him, in spite of the remarkable impression which grief had made on my countenance: but why do I say in spite of it! perhaps he was touched alone by my sad and languishing air, which prepossessed him in favour of my fidelity: his love, in all probability, was the effect of my melancholly; for he told me, more than once, that he looked upon me as a miracle of constancy;

ey; and that, for this reason, he even envied the fate of my husband, how deplorable soever it was in other respects: in a word, he was struck at the sight of me, and had no occasion to see me a second time, in order to take the resolution of making me his wife.

He chose the intercession of my kinswoman, towards the obtaining of my consent: she came to my lodgings accordingly, and represented to me, that my husband having ended his days in the kingdom of Fez, as we had been informed, it was not reasonable that I should bury my charms any longer; that I had sufficiently bewailed the fate of a man with whom I had been united but a few moments; and that I ought to profit by the occasion that now presented itself: by which means, I should be the happiest woman in the world. Then she extolled the great family of the old marquis, his vast estate, and unblemished character: but her eloquence in displaying the advantages he possessed was in vain: it was not in her power to persuade me; not that I doubted the death of Don Alvaro, or was restrained by the fear of seeing him again, when I should least expect him; the little inclination, or rather the reluctance, I felt for a second marriage, after having suffered so many misfortunes by my first, was the only obstacle my relation had to remove. She did not despair for all that; on the contrary, it redoubled her zeal for Don Ambrosio; she engaged my whole family in the interests of that lord; my relations pressed me to accept of such an advantageous match; I was every moment besieged, importuned, and tormented; and my misery, which daily increased, contributed not a little to overcome my resistance.

Being unable, therefore, to hold out any longer, I yielded to their pressing instances, and married the marquis of Guardia, who, the day after our nuptials, carried me to a very fine castle which he had, situated near Burgos, between Grajal and Rodillas. He conceived the most violent passion for me, and I observed, in the whole of his behaviour, the utmost desire of

of pleasing me. His only study was to anticipate my wishes: no husband had ever such a tender regard for his wife; and no lover ever shewed more complaisance to his mistress. I should have been passionately fond of Don Ambrosio, notwithstanding the disproportion of our years, had I been capable of loving any one after Don Alvaro; but a constant heart can never change. The endeavours of my second husband to please me were rendered ineffectual by the remembrance of my first; so that I could only requite his tenderness with pure sentiments of gratitude.

I was in this disposition, when one day, taking the air at a window of my apartment, I perceived in the garden, a kind of peasant, who earnestly looked at me: thinking he was the gardener's servant, I took no notice of him; but next day, being again at the window, I saw him in the same place, and he seemed to view me with uncommon attention. Struck with this circumstance, I looked at him in my turn, and after having some time considered him, thought I recalled the features of Don Alvaro! This apparition raised an inconceivable tumult within me. I shrieked aloud; but luckily, there was nobody present, except Inez, who, of all my servants, enjoyed the greatest share of my confidence. When I imparted to her the suspicion that alarmed me, she laughed at my apprehension, believing that my eyes were imposed upon by some slight remembrance.—“Recollect yourself, madam, (said she) and don't imagine you have seen your former husband: what likelihood is there, that he should be here in the dress of a peasant? or, indeed, what probability is there of his being alive? I will go down into the garden, (added she) and talk to this countryman, and when I have learnt who he is, come back and let you know.” Inez accordingly went into the garden, and soon after returned to my apartment in great emotion, saying, “Madam, your suspicion is but too just! it is Don Alvaro himself whom you have seen! he has discovered himself, and demands a secret interview.”

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As I had, at that very time, an opportunity of receiving Don Alvaro, the marquis being at Burgos, I ordered my maid to bring him into my closet by a private stair-case. You may well think that I was in a terrible agitation, and altogether unable to support the presence of a man who had a right to load me with reproaches. As soon as he appeared I fainted away. Inez and he flew to my assistance, and when they had brought me out of my swoon, Don Alvaro said, "Madam, for heaven's sake compose yourself; let not my presence be a punishment to you; I have no intention to give you the least pain; I come not as a furious husband, to call you to an account of your plighted troth, and upbraid you with the second engagement you have contracted: I know very well, that it was the work of your relations: I am acquainted with all the persecutions you have suffered on that score: besides, the report of my death was spread all over Valladolid; and you had the more reason to believe it true, as no letter from me assured you of the contrary: in short, I know in what manner you have lived since our cruel separation, and that necessity, rather than love, has thrown you into the arms of——"

"Ah, sir! (cried I, interrupting him) why will you excuse your unhappy wife? she is criminal, since you live! why am I not still in that miserable situation in which I lived, before I gave my hand to Don Ambrosio! fatal nuptials! I should then, at least, have had the consolation, in my misery, to see you again without a blush."

"My dear Mencia! (replied Don Alvaro, with a look that testified how much he was affected by my tears) I do not complain: and far from reproaching you with the splendid condition in which I find you, by all my hopes I thank heaven for it! since the melancholy day of my departure from Valladolid, fate has been always adverse, and my life but a chain of misfortunes; and, to crown my misery, it never was in my power to let you hear from me! Too confident

of

of your love, I incessantly represented to myself the condition to which my fatal tenderness had reduced you. My imagination painted Donna Mencía in her tears! you was the greatest of all my misfortunes, and sometimes, I must confess, I have looked upon myself as criminal, in having had the good fortune to please you: I have wished that your affections had inclined towards some of my rivals, since the preference you gave to me had cost you so dear. Nevertheless, after seven years of suffering, more in love than ever, I was resolved to see you. I could not resist this desire, which, at the end of a long slavery, having an opportunity to satisfy, I went, in this disguise to Valladolid, at the hazard of my life; there being informed of every thing, I came hither and found means to introduce myself into the family of the gardener, who has hired me to work under him. You see in what manner I have conducted myself to obtain this private interview; but do not imagine that my design is to trouble the felicity you enjoy, by remaining in this place. No! I love you more than myself; I have the utmost regard for your repose; and now that I have had the melancholy satisfaction of conversing with you, will go and finish, at a distance, that miserable life which I sacrifice to your quiet."

"No, Don Alvaro! no! (cried I, at these words) I will not suffer you to leave me a second time! I will go along with you, and death alone shall divide us!" "Take my advice, (said he) and live with Don Ambrosio; do not associate yourself with my misfortunes, but leave me alone to support the weight of them." He said other things to the same purpose; but the more he seemed willing to sacrifice himself to my happiness, I felt myself the less disposed to consent to it: and when he saw me firmly resolved to follow him, he changed his tone all of a sudden, and assuming a more serene air, said, "Madam, since you have still so much love for Don Alvaro, as to prefer his

his misery to the prosperity you now enjoy, let us go and live at Betancos, at the further end of the kingdom of Galicia, where I have a secure retreat. Although my misfortunes have ruined my estate, they have not yet deprived me of my friends : I have still some faithful ones remaining, who have put me in a condition to carry you off : by their assistance, I have provided a coach at Zamora, bought mules and horses, and am accompanied by three resolute Galicians, armed with carabines and pistols, who now wait for my orders at the village of Rodillas. Let us therefore (added he) take the advantage of Don Ambrosio's absence : I will order the coach to come to the castle-gate, and we will set out instantly." I consented ; Don Alvaro flew to Rodillas, and returned in a short time, with his three attendants, to carry me off from the midst of my women, who not knowing what to think of this event, ran all away, in the utmost consternation : Inez alone was privy to it, but refused to attach her fortune to mine, because she was in love with the valet de chambre of Don Ambrosio.

I got into the coach with Don Alvaro, carrying nothing with me but my own cloaths, and some jewels I had before my second marriage ; for I would take nothing that the marquis had given me, on that occasion. We took the road to Galicia, without knowing if we should be so happy as to reach it, having reason to fear that Don Ambrosio, at his return, would pursue us with a great number of people, and overtake us. Nevertheless, we continued our journey two days, without seeing one horseman behind us ; and in hopes that the third would pass in the same manner, were conversing with each other in great tranquility ; Don Alvaro had just recounted the melancholy adventure which had given rise to the report of his death, and how, after having been a slave five years, he had recovered his liberty ; when yesterday, on the road to Leon, we met those thieves with whom you was in company. He is the person
whom

whom they murdered, with all his attendants, and for whom these my tears are shed.

CHAP. XII.

The disagreeable manner in which Gil Blas and the lady were interrupted.

DONNA Mencia having ended her relation, shed a torrent of tears, while I, letting her give free vent to her sighs, wept also; so natural is it to interest one's self for the unfortunate, especially for a fine lady in distress. I was going to ask what she intended to do in this present conjuncture; and perhaps she was about to consult me on the same subject; when our conversation was interrupted by a great noise in the inn, which, in spite of us, attracted our attention. This noise was occasioned by the arrival of the corregidor, followed by two Alguazils* and a guard, who without any ceremony entered the room where we were. A gentleman who accompanied them approached me first, and examining my dress, had no occasion to hesitate long, but cried, "By St. Jago! this is my individual doubler, as easy to be known again as my horse: you may apprehend this gallant on my testimony; he is one of the thieves who have an unknown retreat somewhere in this country."

At this discourse, by which I understood he was the gentleman who had been robbed, and whose spoils I was unluckily in possession of, I was surprized, confounded, and dismayed! The corregidor, whose office obliged him to put a bad construction on my disorder, rather than interpret it favourably, concluded that I was not accused without reason, and presuming that the lady might be an accomplice, ordered us to be imprisoned separately. This judge, far from being one of those who assume a stern coun-

* Alguazils are attendants of justice, whose office resembles that of our bailiffs.

tenance, was all softness and smiles; but God knows if he was a bit the better for that; for I was no sooner committed, than he came into the jail with his two terriers, I mean the Alguazils, who (not forgetting their laudable custom) began to rummage me in a moment. What a glorious windfal was this for those honest gentlemen! I do not believe that ever they got such a booty before: at every handful of pistoles they pulled out, I saw their eyes sparkle with joy; the corregidor, in particular, was transported! "Child," (said he, with a voice full of meekness) we must do our duty, but be not afraid: if thou art innocent, thou shalt sustain no harm." In the mean time, with all their gentleness, they emptied my pockets, and even robbed me of that which the thieves had respected, I mean my uncle's forty ducats: their greedy and indefatigable hands searched me from head to foot, they turned me about on all sides, and even stript me to see if I had any money between my shirt and my skin. When they had dexterously acquitted themselves in this manner, I was interrogated by the corregidor, to whom I ingenuously recounted every thing that had happened to me. He ordered my deposition to be taken in writing, and then went away with his attendants and my coin, leaving me entirely naked among straw.

"O life! (cried I, when I found myself alone in this condition) how full of capracious accidents and disappointments art thou! Since I left Oviedo, I have met with nothing but misfortunes! Scarce had I got out of one danger, when I fell into another! and when I came into this town, I was far from thinking that I should so soon become acquainted with the corregidor." While I made these vain reflections, I put on again the cursed doublet and the rest of the dress which my evil genius had lent me; then exhorting myself to take courage, "Come Gil Blas, (said I to myself) shew thy fortitude: it shall ill become thee to despair in an ordinary prison, after
having

having put thy patience to such a severe trial in the subterranean abyss. But alas! (added I, in a sorrowful tone) I abuse myself; how shall I escape from hence, when I am utterly deprived of the means?" In effect, I had too good reason to say so; for a prisoner without money is like a bird whose wings are clipped.

Instead of the partridge and rabbit I had bespoke, they brought me a little brown bread and a pitcher of water, and left me to fret at leisure in a dungeon, where I remained fifteen whole days, without seeing a human creature, except the turnkey, who came every morning to renew my provisions. As often as I saw him, I endeavoured to speak and enter into conversation with him, in order to divert me a little; but this venerable person made no answer to what I said; I could not extract one word from him: nay, for the most part, he came in and went out, without so much as deigning me a look. On the sixteenth day, the corregidor coming in, said, "Thou mayest now give a loose to joy. I bring thee agreeable tidings. I have ordered the lady who was along with thee to be conducted to Burgos. I examined her before her departure, and her answers have exculpated thee. Thou shalt be enlarged this very day, provided that the mulcteer, with whom (as thou sayest) thou camest from Pennaslor to Cacabelos, confirms thy deposition. He is now in Astorga, and I have sent for him; and if he agrees with thee, in the adventure of the rack, I will instantly set thee free."

These words gave me infinite joy! I looked upon myself already acquitted; I thanked the judge for his just and expeditious decision, and had not quite finished my compliment, when the carrier, conducted by two soldiers, arrived: I remembered his face immediately; but he, having without doubt sold my portmanteau, and all that was in it, was afraid of being obliged to restore the money he had received for it,
if

if he should own that he knew me; and therefore affirmed with astonishing assurance, that far from knowing me, he had never seen me before! "Ah! traitor, (cried I) rather confess that thou hast sold my goods; and bear witness to the truth: look at me again. I am one of the young people whom you threatened with the torture, at the borough of Caca-belos, and frightened very much." The carrier answered coldly, that I talked of an affair of which he was utterly ignorant; and, as he maintained to the last, that I was unknown to him, my enlargement was deferred till another time: so that I was obliged to arm myself with patience a-new, and resolve to regale myself still with my bread and water, and a sight of the silent turnkey.—The thoughts of being unable to free myself from the claws of justice, although I was not guilty of the least crime, threw me into despair: I wished myself again in the cavern, "where in the main (said I to myself) I was less disagreeably situated than in this dungeon: there I ate and drank in plenty, conversed with the robbers, and lived in the sweet hope of making my escape; instead of which, notwithstanding my innocence, I shall, perhaps, think myself happily quit, to get out of this place, in order to be sent to the galleys."

CH A P. XIII.

By what accident Gil Blas was set at liberty at last; and whither he directed his course.

WHILE I passed my days in entertaining myself with these reflections, my adventures, such as they appeared in my deposition, spread all over the town; upon which many people, being curious to see me, came and presented themselves, one after another, at a small chink, through which the light was conveyed into my prison, and after having observed me for some time went away. I was surprized at this novelty; for since the day of my

my imprisnment, I had not before seen a living soul at that window, which served to enlighten a court where horror reigned in silence. Guessing from this, that I made some noise in town, I did not know whether to interpret it as a good or bad omen.

One of the first that offered themselves to my view was the little ballad-singer of Mondonedo, who, having been equally afraid of the torture, had fled as well as I.—I knew him again immediately, and as he did not pretend to have forgot me, we saluted one another; and falling into a long conversation, I was obliged to repeat my adventures a new: for his part, he informed me of what had happened in the inn at Cacabelos, between the carrier and the new-married wife, after we had been driven away by a panic: in a word, he acquainted me with the whole of what I have already rehearsed on that subject.—Afterwards, taking leave of me for the present, he promised, without loss of time, to labour for my deliverance; and every body who came (as he did) through curiosity, seemed affected with my misfortune, and even assured me, that they would join the little ballad-singer, and do all that lay in their power to procure my enlargement.

They kept their promise effectually, and spoke in my behalf to the corregidor, who no longer doubting my innocence, especially when the ballad-singer had told him what he knew of the matter, at the end of three weeks came into the prison, and said, “Gil Blas, I don’t choose to protract things: go, thou art free, and mayest quit the prison when thou wilt.—But tell me, (pursued he) if thou shouldst be brought to the wood, in which the subterranean retreat is, couldst thou not find it out?” “No, sir, (I replied); for as I went in at night, and came out before day, it would be impossible for me to fix upon the spot.” Upon this the judge withdrew, telling me that he was going to order the turnkey to set the prison doors open

open for me.—In effect, the gaoler came into my dungeon a moment after, with one of his men carrying a bundle of cloaths: and stripping me (with a grave and silent air) of my doublet and breeches, which were made of fine cloth, and almost new, they put on me a shabby footman's frock, and pushed me out by the shoulders.

The joy that prisoners commonly feel in recovering their liberty, was moderated by my confusion in seeing myself so poorly equipt; and I was tempted to leave the town instantly, that I might withdraw myself from the eyes of the people, whose looks I could scarce endure: but my gratitude got the better of my shame; I went to thank the ballad-singer, to whom I was so much obliged: and he could not help laughing when he saw me.—“What a strange figure you are!” (said he): Justice I see has been done you in her forms.”—“I do not complain of justice, (I replied): she is most equitable; I wish only that all her officers were honest men. They ought at least to have spared my cloaths, which I think I paid for pretty handsomely.”—“I think so too (said he); but they will tell you, these are formalities, which must be observed. What! do you think (for example) that your horse has been restored to the right owner? not at all; I assure you he is now actually in the stable of the town clerk, where he has been deposited as a proof of the robbery; and I don't believe the poor gentleman will ever retrieve so much as the crupper.—But let us shift our discourse (continued he): what is your design? what scheme do you intend to prosecute at present?” “I want to go to Burgos (said I), in order to find out the lady I delivered, who will give me a few pistoles, with which I will purchase a new cassock, and repair to Salamanca, where I will endeavour to make my Latin turn to some advantage. All I am concerned at is, that I am at some distance from Burgos, and shall want subsistence on the road.” “I understand you (he replied;

ed): here is my purse:—'tis, indeed, a little low; but a ballad-singer, you know, is not a bishop." At the same time he slipped it into my hand so cheerfully, that I could not for my soul refuse the offer, such as it was. I thank'd him as much as if he had given me all the gold in Peru, and made a thousand professions of service, which I never had an opportunity to perform. Then, bidding him farewell, I left the town, without having visited those other persons who had contributed to my enlargement; contenting myself with bestowing upon them, in my own thoughts, a thousand benedictions.

The little ballad-singer was in the right to speak modestly of his purse, in which I found very little money: but happily for me, I had been used two months to a very frugal diet; and I had still some rials left, when I arrived at the borough of Ponte de Mula, which is but a little way from Burgos. Here I halted to enquire about Donna Mencía, and going into an inn, the mistress of which was a little, lean, fierce, insolent creature, I perceived at once, by the disdainful look she darted at me, that my frock was not at all to her liking; a disgust which I forgave with all my heart.—I sat down at table, where I eat some bread and cheese, and swallowed a few draughts of execrable wine, which they brought for me; and during this repast, which was very well suited to my dress, I wanted to enter into conversation with my landlady.—I begged her to tell me if she knew the marquis of Guardia; if his castle was far from the borough; and, in particular, if she had heard what was become of the marchioness his lady. "You ask a great many questions," (replied she with a scornful look :) she told me however, (though with a very bad grace) that the castle of Don Ambrosio was but a short league from Ponte de Mula.

When I had done eating and drinking, (it being by this time pretty late) I express'd a desire of going to rest, and bade them shew me into a bed-chamber,

"A be

"A bed-chamber for you! (said the landlady, darting at me a look full of haughtiness and contempt) I have no bed-chambers for people who sup on a morsel of cheese—All my beds are bespoke:—I expect gentlemen of importance to lodge here to-night;—so that all I can do for you is to quarter you in the barn; and it won't (I suppose) be the first time you have slept upon straw." She did not know how true she spoke; but I made no reply, and very wisely condescended to sneak into the straw, where in a very short time I slept like one who had suffered much fatigue.

C H A P. XIV.

Of his reception at Burgos by Donna Mencía.

I Did not lie a-bed like a sluggard next morning, but went to reckon with my landlady, who seemed less proud and snappish than she had been the night before: a change that I ascribed to the presence of three honest soldiers belonging to the holy brotherhood, who conversed with her in a very familiar manner.—They had lodged all night at the inn, and it was, doubtless, for these gentlemen of importance, that all the beds had been bespoke.

Inquiring in the borough the way to the castle whither I wanted to go, I addressed myself by accident to a man of the character of my landlord at Pennafior: not contented with answering the question I asked, he let me know that Don Ambrosio was dead three weeks ago, and that the marchioness his lady had retired into a convent at Burgos, which he named.—I repaired immediately to that city, instead of following the road to the castle, as I formerly intended, and flying directly to the convent where she was, begg'd the favour of the portress to tell her that a young man, just released from the gaol of Astorga, desired to speak with her. The nun went immediately to do what I desired, and returning, introduced me into a parlour, where I had not been long when I saw the

widow of Don Ambrosio appear at the grate in deep mourning.

"You are welcome (said the lady to me:) four days ago I wrote to a person at Astorga, desiring him to go to you from me, and tell you that I should be glad to see you, as soon as you should be released; and I did not doubt of your being enlarged in a very little time, what I said to the corregidor in your behalf having been sufficient for that purpose.—In answer to this he wrote, that you had recovered your liberty, but nobody knew whither you was gone; so that I was afraid I should never see you again, and consequently be deprived of the pleasure of manifesting my gratitude.—Don't be ashamed, (added she, observing my confusion on account of appearing before her in a miserable dress) let not your present condition give you the least uneasiness. After the important service you have done me, I should be the most ungrateful of all women, if I neglected to do something for you; I intend to extricate you out of the wretched situation in which you are: it is my duty, and I am able to perform it.—The considerable wealth I am now mistress of, empowering me to acquit myself towards you, without incommoding myself."

"You know (continued she) my adventures to the day on which we were both imprisoned; and I will tell you what has happened to me since.—When the corregidor of Astorga had ordered me to be conducted to Burgos, after having heard from my mouth a faithful relation of my story, I repaired to Don Ambrosio's castle, where my return occasioned extreme surprize, tho' I was told it was too late, for the marquis, thunder-struck at the news of my flight, had fallen ill, and the physicians despaired of his life.

This was fresh cause for me to complain of the rigour of my fate: nevertheless, having advertised him of my arrival, I entered his chamber, and, running to his bed-side, threw myself on my knees, my face

bathed

bathed in tears, and my heart oppressed with the most afflicting grief. What brings you hither? (said he when he perceived me) Are you come to contemplate your own work? Was it not sufficient for you to deprive me of life, but you must also have the satisfaction of being an eye-witness of my death?" No, my lord, (I replied) Inez must have told you, that I fled with my husband; and had it not been for the dismal accident which has robb'd me of him, you never should have seen me again! At the same time I let him know, that Don Alvaro had been murdered by robbers, who afterwards carried me into their subterranean retreat; and, in short, informed him of all that had happened.—When I had done speaking, Don Ambrosio stretched out his hand to me, saying with the utmost tenderness, I am satisfied—I cease to complain:—why should I reproach you! having found again a husband whom you dearly loved, you abandoned me to follow his fortune: ought I to blame you for such conduct? No, madam, I should have been in the wrong to murmur at it, therefore would not suffer you to be pursued; I revered the sacred rights of your ravisher, and even your inclination towards him.—In fine, I do you justice; and, by your return, you have retrieved all my tenderness! Yes, my dear Mencia, your presence overwhelms me with joy! but alas! it will not last long. I feel my last hour approaching! Scarce are you restored to my arms, when I must bid you an eternal adieu!" At these affecting words, my tears redoubled! I felt and expressed an immoderate affliction! I question if the death of Don Alvaro, whom I adored, had cost me more sighs! Don Ambrosio's presage of his own death was but too true: he expired next day; and I remained mistress of a considerable estate which he had settled upon me, at our marriage, I intend to make no bad use of it. The world shall not see me (though I am still young) throw myself into the arms of a third husband: for

besides that I think such conduct would be inconsistent with the virtue and delicacy of my sex, I own, I have no longer any relish for the world; but design to end my days in this convent, and become a benefactress to it."

Such was the discourse of Donna Mencia, who taking out a purse from under her robe, put it in my hand, saying, "Here are a hundred ducats, which I give you only to buy cloaths: come and see me again, after you have equipped yourself; for I do not intend to confine my gratitude within such narrow bounds." I gave the lady a thousand thanks; and swore I would not depart from Burgos without taking leave of her: after this oath, which I had no intention to break, I went in quest of an inn, and going into the first I perceived, demanded a room, telling the landlord (to prevent the bad opinion he might conceive of me, from my shabby frock) that notwithstanding my appearance, I was in a condition to pay handsomely for my lodging. At these words, the inn-keeper, whose name was Majuelo, naturally a great wag, surveying me from top to bottom, answered drily, with a sarcastick sneer, there was no occasion for such an assurance, to persuade him, that I should spend like a prince in his house; for he discovered something noble in me by my dress; and in short did not doubt that I was a gentleman of a very independant fortune. I could easily perceive that the rascal rallied me, and in order to put an end to his witticisms, shewed my purse. I even counted my ducats on a table before him, and observing that my coin altered his opinion very much in my favour; desired he would recommend me to a taylor. "You had better (said he) send for a broker, who will bring along with him all kinds of apparel ready made, and fit you in a trice." I approved of his advice, and resolved to follow it: but the day being near a close, deferred my purchase till next morning, and thought of nothing but making a good supper, to indemnify me

for the sorry meals I had made since my deliverance from the cavern.

C H A P. XV.

Of the manner in which Gil Blas dressed himself—Of the new present he received from the lady, and the equipage in which he departed from Burgos.

THEY brought for my supper a huge fricasee of sheep-trotters, which I picked to the bones; and having drank in proportion, betook myself to rest. As I had the convenience of a good bed, I was in hopes of enjoying a sound sleep: but for all that, could not close my eyes; my thoughts being engrossed, in determining upon the dress I was to chuse. "What must I do? (said I to myself) prosecute my first design, buy a cassock, and go to Salamanca in quest of a tutor's place? But why should I take the habit of a licentiate? Am I ambitious of consecrating myself to the church; or have I the least bias that way? No. I feel myself (on the contrary) quite otherwise inclined: I will turn gentleman, and endeavour to make my fortune in the world."

Having resolved upon this, I longed for day with the utmost impatience; and no sooner perceived the glimpse of light than I got up, and made so much noise in the inn, that I wakened all those who were asleep. I called the waiters, who were still abed, and who loaded me with curses by way of answer. They were obliged to rise however, and I gave them no quarter, until one of them had gone for a broker, who soon appeared, followed by two apprentices, carrying each a great green bag on his shoulders. He saluted me with great civility, saying, "Signior cavalier, you are very happy in having applied to me, rather than to any other body. I don't chuse to disparage my brethren. God forbid that I should prejudice their reputation in the least! but between you and me, there's no conscience among them. They are all as abandoned as Jews. I am the only

honest broker in town. I confine myself to a moderate profit, being satisfied with a pound in the shilling—I mean a shilling in the pound. Thank heaven I deal upon the square with all mankind.

The broker, after this preamble, which I took for gospel, ordered his men to untie the bundles, and shewed me suits of all colours. Some, which were of plain cloth, I rejected with disdain, as being too mean; but they made me try one which seemed to have been made exactly for my shape, and which struck my fancy, although somewhat worn. It consisted of a doublet with slashed sleeves, a pair of breeches, and a cloak, the whole of blue velvet embroidered with gold. Fixing on this, I cheapened it, and the broker perceiving I was bent upon it, observed that I had an excellent taste. “Odds bodikins! (cried he) one may see you know what you are about: I can tell you, that suit was made for one of the greatest lords in the kingdom, who never had it three times on his back. Examine the velvet, nothing can be finer; and as for the embroidery, you must confess the work is exquisite.” What will you sell it for? (said I;) he answered, “Sixty ducats; I am a rogue if I have not refused the money.” The alternative was plain. I offered five and forty, which might be about double the value. “Mr. What d’ye call-um, (replied the broker with an air of indifference) I never exact too much: I am always at a word. Here, (continued he, shewing me some of those I had refused) buy this, I’ll sell it a pennyworth.” This was only to excite my desire of purchasing that which I had cheapened, and, accordingly, imagining that he would not abate one farthing of his price, I counted into his hand the sixty ducats. When he saw me part with them so easily, I believe, in spite of his boasted honesty, he wished that he had asked a great deal more: pretty well satisfied, however, with having gained nineteen shillings in the pound, he went away, with his apprentices, whom I had not forgotten.

Having

Having now a very handsome cloak, doublet, and breeches, I spent the rest of the morning in providing other necessaries. I bought a hat, silk stockings, shoes, linen, and a sword: after which, having dressed, what infinite pleasure had I in beholding myself so well equipped! My eyes (to use the expression) could not sufficiently glut themselves with my attire! Never peacock contemplated his own feathers with more satisfaction. That very day I made my second visit to Donna Mencia, who still received me very kindly, and thanked me again for the service I had done her. On that score, many compliments passed on both sides: after which, wishing me all happiness, she bade me farewell, and retired, without giving me any thing but a ring, worth thirty pistoles, which she desired me to keep in remembrance of her.

I looked very blank with my ring, having laid my account with receiving a much more considerable present, and trudged back to my lodgings in a brown study, little satisfied with the lady's generosity. But just as I entered the inn, a man, who had followed me all the way, came in likewise, and laying aside the cloak in which he was muffled up, discovered a great bag under his arm. At the apparition of this bag, which had all the air of being full of money, I, as well as some other people who were present, stared with our eyes wide open; and I thought I heard the voice of an angel, when the man laying the bag upon a table, pronounced, "Signior Gil Blas, here is something that my lady marchioness has sent you." I made many profound bows to the bearer, whom I overwhelmed with civility: and he was no sooner gone, than I darted upon the bag, like a hawk upon his prey; and carrying it to my chamber, untied it, without loss of time, and found in it a thousand ducats. I had just made an end of counting them, when my landlord, who had heard what the porter said, came in to see the contents of the bag. Thunder-struck at the sight of my coin spread upon the table,

“Zounds, (cried he) what a vast sum of money is here! You must be a devil among the women, (added he, with a satirical smile) for although you have not been four and twenty hours in Burgos, you have a marchioness already under contribution.”

This discourse did not disgust me. I was tempted to leave Majuelo in his mistake, which already gave me a sensible pleasure; so that I do not wonder that young fellows love to be thought men of intrigue. My innocence, however, got the better of my vanity; I undeceived my landlord, and recounted the story of Donna Mencia, to which he listened with great attention. I then disclosed the state of my affairs, and as he seemed to interest himself in my behalf, begged the assistance of his advice. Having mused a while, “Signior Gil Blas (said he) I have a regard for you; and since you have confidence enough in me, to unbosom yourself in this manner, I will, without flattery, tell you what I think you are fittest for. As you seem designed by nature for the court, I advise you to go thither, and attach yourself to some grandee: but be sure either to meddle in his concerns, or enter into his pleasures: otherwise you will lose your time. I know the great. They look upon the zeal and attachment of an honest man, as nothing at all: and mind only such as are necessary to them. But you have another resource (continued he): you are young and handsome; and these qualifications alone, without the least glimpse of understanding, are more than sufficient to captivate a rich widow, or some fine lady unhappily married: if love ruins gentlemen of fortune, it often maintains those who have none. It is my advice therefore, that you go to Madrid; but you must by no means appear without attendants; they judge there, as in other places, by appearance; and you will be considered only in proportion to the figure you make. I will recommend a servant to you—a faithful domestic—a prudent, sober fellow—in one word, a man of my own making. Purchase a couple of mules, one for your-
self

self and another for him, and set out as soon as possible."

This advice was too much to my own taste to be neglected: I therefore next morning bought two handsome mules, and hired the servant he had recommended: he was a fellow thirty years old, of a simple, religious aspect, born as he said, in the kingdom of Galicia; his name was Ambrose de Lamela: far from being selfish, like other servants, he made no words about his wages; but assured me, he would be contented with what in my goodness I should think proper to bestow.—Having provided myself likewise with boots, and a portmanteau to hold my linen and cash, I cleared with my landlord, and early next morning set out from Burgos, on my way to Madrid.

CHAP. XVI.

Shews that we ought not to trust too much to prosperity.

WE slept the first night at Duennas, and arriving at Valladolid the day following, about four o'clock in the afternoon, alighted at an inn, which seemed one of the best in town. I left the care of my mules to my lacquey, and going up stairs into a chamber, whither I ordered a servant of the house to bring my portmanteau, felt myself a little fatigued, and without taking off my boots, threw myself on the bed, where I fell asleep insensibly. It being almost night when I waked, I called for Ambrose, who was gone out, but returned in a little time; when I asked where he had been, he replied, with a pious air, that he was just come from church, where he had been to return thanks to heaven for having preserved him from all evil accidents on the road, from Burgos even unto Valladolid: I approved of his conduct, and bade him order a fowl to the fire for my supper.

At that very instant my landlord entered, with a taper in his hand, lighting in a lady who seemed more handsome than young, and very richly dressed: she

was squired by an old usher, and a little blackamoor carried her train. I was not a little surprized when this lady, after having made a low curt'sy, asked if I was not Signior Gil Blas of Santillane; to which I had no sooner answered in the affirmative, than she quitted her attendant, and embraced me with a transport of joy that redoubled my astonishment. "Blessed be heaven (cried she) for this meeting! You are the person, Signior cavalier, you are the very person I was in quest of!" At this preamble, I thought of the parasite at Pennaflor; and began to look upon the lady as a downright bite; when I was induced to think more favourably of her, by what followed. "I am (added she) cousin germain to Donna Mencia of Mosquera, who has been so much obliged to you; and received a letter from her this morning, importing that having heard you was going to Madrid, I would oblige her very much, by treating you handsomely, provided you should pass this way: I have been running all over the town these two hours, inquiring from inn to inn, about all the strangers that arrived; and by the description your landlord gave me of you, I imagined you might be the deliverer of my cousin. Ah! now that I have found you (continued she) you shall see how sensible I am of the services you have done my family, and in particular to my dear cousin! You shall come to my house immediately, if you please, where you will be more conveniently lodged than here." I would have excused myself, by representing to the lady that I should incommode her family; but there was no resisting her importunities: there was a coach waiting for us at the door, in which she took care to see my portmanteau secured; "because (said she) there are a great many rogues in Valladolid:" an observation I found but too true! In short, I went into the coach along with her and her squire, and suffered myself to be carried away from the inn, to the mortification of the landlord, who by these means found

found himself disappointed of the money which he expected I would spend at his house.

Our coach having rolled some time, stopped at a pretty large house, where we alighted, and went up stairs into a handsome apartment lighted by twenty or thirty wax candles. We passed through a good many servants, of whom the lady asked if Don Raphael was come yet, and was answered in the negative; upon which, addressing herself to me, "Signior Gil Blas, (said she) I have a brother whom I expect this evening from a villa we have two leagues from this: he will be very agreeably surprized to find in this house a gentleman to whom our whole family is so much indebted." She had scarce spoke these words, when we heard a noise below, which (we were told) was occasioned by the arrival of Don Raphael; and that cavalier, who was a young man of a good shape and genteel address, appeared soon after. "Brother (said the lady to him) I am extremely glad of your return; you will assist me in doing honour to Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, to whom we can never enough shew our gratitude for what he has done in behalf of our kinswoman Donna Mencia: there (added she, giving him a letter) you may read what she has wrote on the subject." Don Raphael opening the letter, pronounced these words aloud:

"My dear Camilla,

Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, who preserved my honour as well as my life, has set out for court; and as he will, doubtless, pass through Valladolid, I conjure you by the blood, and still more by the friendship that unites us, to shew him all the respect in your power, and detain him some time in your family. I flatter myself that you will give me that satisfaction, and that my deliverer will receive all manner of civility from you and my cousin Don Raphael. At Burgos, your affectionate kinswoman,

DONNA MENCIA."

“How! (cried Don Raphael) is this the gentleman to whom my cousin owes her honour and life? ah! heaven be praised for this happy rencounter!” So saying he approached, and clasping me in his arms, “What joy do I feel (said he) in embracing Signior Gil Blas of Santillane! my cousin the marchioness had no occasion to lay such injunctions upon us: it would have been sufficient to let us know that you was to pass through Valladolid; my sister and I know very well how to behave ourselves towards a gentleman who has performed such an important piece of service to the person for whom, of all our family, we have the most tender regard.” I answered, as well as I could, to these compliments, which were followed by a great many more of the same nature, and interspersed with a thousand caresses: after which, perceiving that my boots were still on, they ordered their servants to pull them off; and we went into another room, where, the cloth being laid, the gentleman, lady, and I sat down to supper; during which, they said a thousand obliging things to me: not a word escaped me, which they did not repeat as an admirable stroke of wit; and it was surprizing to see how attentive they were in presenting me with all the daintiest morsels. Don Raphael drank frequently to the health of Donna Mencia, in which I followed his example; and I imagined that Camilla, who did us justice, sometimes threw certain very significant looks at me. I even observed that she chose proper opportunities of so doing, as if she had been afraid that her brother would perceive it. This was enough to persuade me of the lady’s being smitten; and I flattered myself with the hope of profiting by that discovery, during my short stay at Valladolid. This hope induced me to yield, without difficulty, to their intreaties, when they requested me to spend a few days with them. They thanked me for my complaisance; and the joy which Camilla discovered, on
this

this occasion, confirmed me in the opinion that I had found the way to her heart.

Don Raphael, seeing me determined to stay with him some time, proposed to carry me to his country house, of which he gave me a magnificent description; and talked of the pleasures he would there entertain me with. "Sometimes (said he) we will take the diversion of hunting, sometimes that of fishing; and if you love walking, we have delightful woods and gardens in abundance: besides, we shall not want good company; and, on the whole, I hope you will not grow melancholy among us." I accepted his offer, and it was determined that we should go to this charming place the very next day. Having projected this agreeable scheme, we rose from table; and Don Raphael embracing me, in a transport of joy, said, "Signior Gil Blas, I will leave my sister to entertain you, while I go immediately to give necessary orders, and advertise those people whom I intend shall be of the party." So saying, he went out of the room, and I continued conversing with the lady, who did not contradict, by her discourse, the soft glances she had thrown at me. She took hold of my hand, and looking at my ring, said, "You have got a pretty diamond enough, but it is a very small one. Are you a connoisseur in stones?" When I answered in the negative, "I am sorry for it (said she) for you might have told me what this is worth." With these words, she shewed me a large ruby on her finger, and while I examined it, added, "An uncle of mine, who was governor of the Spanish colonies in the Philippine isles, made me a present of this ruby, which the jewellers here in Valladolid value at three hundred pistoles." "I believe it is well worth the money (said I) for it is extremely beautiful." "Since you are pleased with it (she replied) I will make an exchange with you." And immediately she pulled off my ring, and put her own on my little finger. Having made this exchange, which I looked upon

upon as a genteel way of making a present, Camilla squeezed my hand, and looked at me in the most languishing manner; then starting up abruptly, wished me good-night, and withdrew in great confusion, as if she had been ashamed of disclosing her sentiments.

Novice as I was in gallantry, I knew well enough how to interpret this precipitate retreat in my favour, and concluded that I should pass my time very agreeably at their villa. Full of this flattering idea, and the prosperous condition of my affairs, I locked myself in the chamber where I was to lie, after having ordered my servant to come and wake me early in the morning: but instead of going to rest, I gave a loose to these agreeable reflections, which my portmanteau, that lay on the table, and my ruby, inspired. Thank heaven! said I to myself, if I have been unfortunate, I am no longer so. On one side a thousand ducats; a ring, worth three hundred pistoles, on the other. My finances will not be exhausted in a hurry. I see now that Majuelo did not flatter me. I shall inflame the hearts of a thousand ladies at Madrid, since I have made such an easy conquest of Camilla. The favours of that generous lady presented themselves to my imagination, with all their charms; and I anticipated the diversions that Don Raphael prepared for me at his house in the country. In the midst of these pleasing images, however, sleep did not fail to shed his poppies over me; so that, finding myself drowsy, I undressed, and went to bed.

Next morning, when I awaked, I perceived that it was already late, and was a good deal surprized, that my valet did not appear in consequence of the order I had given him over-night. Ambrose, said I to myself, my faithful Ambrose, is either at church, or very lazy to-day. But I soon lost that opinion of him, and conceived one much worse; for getting up, and missing my portmanteau, I suspected him

of having stole it in the night. For further information, I opened the chamber-door, and called the hypocrite several times; at last, an old man hearing me, came and said, "What would you please to have, signior? all your people departed from my house long before day." "How! (cried I) your house! am I not at present in the house of Don Raphael?" "I don't know who that gentleman is (said he) but you are in furnished lodgings, and I am the landlord: last night, an hour before your arrival, the lady who supped along with you came hither, and hired this apartment for a great lord, who, she said, travelled incognito; and even paid me before-hand."

I was no longer in the dark; I guessed the characters of Camilla and Don Raphael, and concluded that my servant, being perfectly well acquainted with my affairs, had sold me to these sharpers. Instead of ascribing this unlucky adventure to myself; and considering that it would not have happened to me, had I not been so indiscreet as to unbosom myself unnecessarily to Majuelo; I imputed all to innocent fortune, and cursed my fate a thousand times. The owner of the house, to whom I recounted the adventure, which, perhaps, he knew as well as I did, seemed affected with my sorrow, condoled me, and protested that he was very much mortified to find that such a scene had passed in his house: but I believe, notwithstanding all his professions, he was as much concerned in the trick as my landlord at Burgos, to whom, however, I have always attributed the honour of the invention.

C H A P. XVII.

How Gil Blas bestowed himself after the adventure of the ready furnished lodging.

HAVING heartily bewailed my misfortune, I considered, that instead of giving way to sorrow, I ought to animate myself against mischance; and

and summoning all my courage to my assistance, said to myself, while I put on my cloaths, by way of consolation, "I am happy in that the rogues have not also carried off my apparel, and some ducats which I have still in my purse: I gave them credit for this piece of civility, and sold my boots, which they had been generous enough to leave likewise, to my landlord, for one third of the money they had cost me. Then taking my leave of the ready furnished lodging, without having occasion, thank God, for any body to carry my baggage; the first thing I did, was to go and see whether or not my mules were at the inn, where I alighted the preceding night; though I was of opinion that Ambrose had not left them there; and I wish to God my opinion of him had been always as just; for he told me he had taken care to fetch them away that very evening; wherefore, laying my account with having seen the last of them, as well as of my portmanteau, I strolled about the streets in a melancholy manner, musing on what should be my next course. I was tempted to return to Burgos, and have recourse to Donna Mencía once more; but when I reflected, that in so doing I should abuse the generosity of the lady, and at the same time be looked upon as a booby, I relinquished the thought, swearing I should for the future be upon my guard against women; and I believe at that time, I should have mistrusted the chaste Susanna. I cast my eyes, from time to time upon my ring, and when I considered that it was a present from Camilla, sighed with vexation. Alas! thought I, though I am no connoisseur in rubies, I have too good reason to know those who exchange them; and I believe it is not necessary that I should go to a jeweller to be persuaded that I am a fool.

I was willing, however, to be informed of the worth of my ring, and accordingly shewed it to a lapidary, who valued it at three ducats. Though I was not surprized at this estimation, I wished the
niece

niece of the governor of the Philippine isles at the devil, or rather only repeated the wish. As I came out of the jeweller's house, a young fellow who was passing, stopt to consider me. Not being able to recollect him at first, although I had formerly been intimate with him.—“How, Gil Blas! (said he) do you pretend ignorance of me, or have two years altered the son of barber Nunnez so much, that you do not know him? Don't you remember Fabricius, your companion and school-fellow, with whom you have so often disputed, at the house of Doctor Godinez, upon predicable and metaphysical degrees?”

I remembered him before he had done speaking, and we embraced one another with transport. “My dear friend (continued he) how glad am I to meet thee! I can't express the joy I feel.—But (added he, with an air of surprize) what do I see! Egad! thou art dressed like a prince! a fine sword, silk stockings, doublet and cloak of velvet embroidered with gold! Odd's niggers! this smells strong of intrigues! I'll hold a wager, that thou sharest the bounty of some liberal old lady.” “You are mistaken (said I) my affairs are not so flourishing as you imagine.”—“Pshaw, pshaw, (replied he) you affect to be a close fellow; that fine ruby on your finger, Mr. Gil Blas, whence comes that, I pray you?” “It comes (said I) from an arrant jade. Fabricius, my dear Fabricius, far from being in vogue among the women at Valladolid, know that I am a most ridiculous dupe.”

I pronounced these last words so ruefully, that Fabricius was convinced of my having been imposed upon in some shape or other; and pressed me to tell him what were my reasons for complaining of the fair sex. I was easily prevailed upon to satisfy his curiosity; but as my story was pretty long, and besides, we had no intention of parting in a hurry, we went into a publick house, that we might converse together more at our ease; and there, while we breakfasted,

fasted, I recounted to him all that had happened to me since my departure from Oviedo. He thought my adventures were extremely odd, and after having assured me, that he very much sympathized with me, in my present unlucky situation, said, "We must console ourselves, my child, as well as we can, for all the misfortunes of life. When a man of spirit is unlucky, he waits with patience for a more favourable conjuncture. One should never, as Cicero says, let himself be so much dejected as to forget that he is a man. For my own part, I am of that very disposition: my misfortunes have not been able to overwhelm me, because I am always above the caprice of fate. For instance, I loved a girl of some fashion at Oviedo, who had a tendre for me; I asked her in marriage of her father, and he refused me. Another on this occasion would have died of grief: but I (admire the force of genius) carried off the dear creature. As she was passionate, thoughtless and vain, pleasure, of consequence, always determined her to the prejudice of duty. I led her a dance for six months, through the kingdom of Gallicia, from whence, as I had given her a taste for travelling, she was desirous of going to Portugal; but thought proper to chuse a new conductor: here was another subject of despair; but for all that, I did not sink under the weight of it; and, wiser than Menelaus, instead of declaring war against the Paris who had stole my Helen; I thought myself very much obliged to him for having rid my hands of her. Afterwards, being unwilling to return to the Asturias, that I might avoid all expostulation with justice, I advanced into the kingdom of Leon, spending, from town to town, the remainder of the money I had carried off with my infant; for we had quitted Oviedo with the full hand; and arrived at Palencia with a solitary ducat, out of which I was obliged to buy a pair of shoes; so that the remaining part could not last much longer: my situation became very perplexing, and I

was

was even reduced to a very strict regimen: there was no time to be lost; I resolved to go to service, and hired myself to a great woollen-draper, whose son was an accomplished rake. Here, though I found an asylum against hunger, I was not a little embarrassed; for the father ordered me to be a spy upon the son, and the son intreated me to assist him in cheating the father. Being obliged to determine, I preferred the intreaty to the command; and that preference cost me my place. I afterwards went into the service of an old painter, who would have taught me, through friendship, the principles of his art; in the demonstration of which, however, I was almost famished. This gave me a disgust for painting, and a dislike for Palencia at the same time; and coming to Valladolid, by the greatest good fortune in the world I got into the family of one of the directors of the hospital, where I now live perfectly happy. Signior Manuel Ordonez, my master, is a man of profound piety, who walks with his eyes always fixed on the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. They say, that from his youth, having nothing in view but the funds of the poor, he attached himself to them with indefatigable zeal; and accordingly his cares have not been ill requited; every thing prospers with him. What a blessing it is that he has made himself rich in managing the affairs of the poor!"

Fabricius having harangued in this manner, "I am very glad (said I to him) to find thee so well satisfied with thy condition: but, between you and me, I think you might play a more honourable part in the world." "You are mistaken, Gil Blas (answered he) there is no situation in life more agreeable to one of my humour, than that which I now enjoy: the employment of a lacquey is troublesome, I own, to a silly fellow; but to a lad of spirit it is full of charms. A superior genius that goes to service does not confine himself to the menial circumstances of his duty like a simpleton: he goes into a family to com-
mand

mand rather than obey : he begins by studying his master, he accommodates himself to his foibles, gains his confidence, and then leads him by the nose.— 'Tis thus that I have behaved towards my director.— I soon discovered his hypocrisy, and perceived that he wanted to pass for a person of great sanctity : I pretended to be his dupe ; that costs nothing. I did more, I imitated him, and acting in his presence the same farce that he plays before others, I deceived the deceiver, and am by degrees become his factotum. Under his auspices I hope one day to be concerned in the affairs of the poor ; in which case I may chance to make my fortune too, for I find myself as well inclined towards them as he can be for his heart."

" These are fine hopes, (replied I) my dear Fabricius : I congratulate thee upon thy prospect ; and, for my own part, will have recourse to my former scheme ; convert my embroidered habit into a cassock, repair to Salamanca, and listing myself under the banners of the university, perform the office of a tutor."

" A fine project truly ! (cried Fabricius) an agreeable whim ! what a fool wouldst thou be to turn pedant at thy age ! Dost thou know, wretch ! what thou art about to do ? Soon as thou shalt be employed, the whole family will have their eyes on thee, and all thy actions will be scrupulously examined ; thou must be eternally under constraint, clothe thyself with hypocrisy, and appear possessed of every virtue. Thou wilt not have a moment to bestow upon thy pleasures. Like a perpetual censor of thy pupil, thou must pass the day in teaching him Latin, and in rebuking him, when he shall say or do any thing amiss : and after so much labour and constraint, what will be the fruit of thy cares ? If the little gentleman wants capacity, it will be said, that thou hast not given him good education ; and his parents will turn thee away, without any recompence, perhaps even without paying thy appointment. Don't therefore talk to me of a preceptor's post, which is like a benefice, with the cure of souls :

souls : but commend me to the employment of a lacquey, which is a simple benefice, encumbered with no charge. When a master has vice, a superior genius in his service will flatter them, and often turn them to its advantage. A footman lives in a good family, without the least disquiet ; for after having eaten and drank his bellyful, he sleeps like the son of a lord, and gives himself no trouble about either baker or butcher.

“ I should never ha’ done, child, (continued he) was I to recount all the advantages of footmen. Take my advice, Gil Blas, quit for ever the design of becoming tutor, and follow my example.” “ Yes ; but, Fabricius, (said I) one does not always meet with directors ; and if I should resolve to turn lacquey, I would, at least, chuse to be well settled.” “ Oh ! you are in the right, (said he) that shall be my business ; I will insure thee a good place, if it was for no other reason than to snatch a pretty fellow from the university.

The approaching misery with which I was threatened, and the air of satisfaction that appeared in Fabricius, persuading me more than his reasons, I determined to go to service ; whereupon leaving the publick house, my companion said, “ I will conduct you to the house of a person, who is consulted by almost all the footmen out of place : he has spies who inform him of what happens in all families ; he knows where servants are wanted, and keeps an exact register not only of the vacant places, but even of the good and bad qualities of masters : he is one who was formerly a friar in some convent or other : and in short, ’twas he who recommended me to the place I now enjoy.”

While we conversed about such a singular office of intelligence, the son of barber Nunnez carried me into a blind alley, and we entered a little house, where we found a man about fifty years old, writing at a table. We saluted him very respectfully ; but whether he

he was naturally proud, or accustomed to see lacquies and coachmen only, he had contracted an habit of receiving people cavalierly, and did not rise from his seat, but contented himself with making a slight inclination of the head. He looked hard at me, however, and I could easily perceive he was very much surprized that a young man, dressed in embroidered velvet, should want to turn valet; he had more reason to think I was come to be provided with one; but he did not continue long in suspense, with regard to my intention; for Fabricius, accosting him at once, said, "Signior Arias de Londonna, give me leave to present one of my best friends to you; he is a young man of a good family, whom misfortunes have reduced to the necessity of going to service. Pray inform him of a good place, and depend upon his gratitude." "Gentlemen, (answered Arius, coldly) this is the manner of you all: before you are fixed, you make the finest promises in the world, but once you are well settled, you think no more of them." "How! (replied Fabricius) do you complain of me? have not I done honourably by you?" You might have done better still, (said Arias) your place is worth a clerk's employment; and you have paid me as if I had introduced you to the house of an author." Here I interposed, and told Signior Arias, that, to shew him I was not ungrateful, my acknowledgment should precede his service: at the same time, taking out two ducats, I put them into his hand; with a promise, that I would not stop there, provided I should find myself in a good family.

He seemed pleased with my behaviour, and said he loved to be treated in that manner: "There are continued he) excellent posts vacant, which I will mention, in order that you may chuse one that is to your liking." So saying, he put on his spectacles, opened a register, which lay on the table, turned over some leaves, and began to read as follows: "A lacquy is wanted for captain Torbellino, a passionate, cruel

cruel, whimsical man, who grumbles incessantly, swears, beats, and, commonly, maims his servants."

"Let us pass on to another, (cried I, at that picture) that captain is not to my taste." Arias smiled at my vivacity, and proceeded in this manner: "Donna Manuela of Sandoval, a superannuated widow, full of peevishness and caprice, has, at present, never a footman; she keeps but one for ordinary, and him never a whole day. There has been one livery suit in the house these ten years, which serves all valets who enter, of what size and shape soever they may be; but it may be said they only try it on; for it is still as good as new, although it has been worn by two thousand lacquies. Doctor Alvar Fannez, a physician and chymist wants a servant; his domestics are well fed, handsomely entertained, and have, moreover, great wages; but he tries experiments upon them, with his medicines, and there are often vacant places in his house."

"Oh! I believe it (cried Fabricius, laughing) upon my conscience you shew us abundance of fine places."

"Have patience (said Arias de Londonna) we have not yet done; there are some that, I am sure will please you." Then he continued to read in these terms, "Donna Alfonsa de Solis, an old devotee, who spends two thirds of the day at church, and insists upon her footman's being always along with her, has not had a lacquey these three weeks. The licentiate Sedillo, an old canon of the chapter of this city, yesterday in the evening, turned away his footman." "Halt there, Signior Arias de Londonna (cried Fabricius, in this place) we will stick to this last post. The licentiate Sedillo is one of my master's friends, with whom I am perfectly well acquainted: I know that he has for housekeeper an old devotee called Dame Jacinta, who disposes of every thing in the house: it is one of the best families in Valladolid, for a servant who loves a quiet life and good cheer: besides, the canon is old and infirm, very much subject to the gout, and will

will soon make his will; so that there is room to hope for a good legacy. What a charming prospect for a footman! Gil Blas (added he, turning towards me) let us lose no time, my lad, but go instantly to the house of the licentiate, where I will myself present you, and answer for thy character." At these words, for fear of losing such a fair opportunity, we took our leave in a hurry of Signior Arias, who assured me for my money, that if I should be baulked of this place, I might depend upon his recommending me to one as good.

B O O K II.

C H A P. I.

Fabricius conducts Gil Blas, and introduces him to the licentiate Sedillo; the situation of this canon; a description of his housekeeper.

WE were so much afraid of coming too late, that we made but one leap from the alley to the house of the old licentiate. We knocked at the door, which was opened by a girl ten years old, who passed for the housekeeper's niece, in spite of scandal; and asking if the canon could be spoke with, Dame Jacinta appeared: she was a person already arrived at the age of discretion, but still handsome; and, in particular, I admired the freshness of her complexion. She wore a long gown of coarse stuff, with a large leathern girdle, from one side of which hung a bunch of keys, and from the other a rosary of great beads. As soon as we perceived her, we bowed with profound respect, and she returned the salute very civilly, but with a modest deportment and downcast eyes.

"Having

" Having understood (said my comrade to her) that master licentiate Sedillo has occasion for an honest valet, I am come to present one, with whom, I hope, he will be satisfied." The housekeeper, at these words, lifting her eyes, surveyed me with attention, and, not being able to reconcile my embroidery with the discourse of Fabricius, asked if it was I who wanted the vacant place. " Yes, (said the son of Nunnez) it is this young man, who notwithstanding his appearance, has met with misfortunes that oblige him to go to service. But he will soon forget his mis-haps (added he, with an insinuating air) if he has the happiness to come into this family, and live with the virtuous Jacinta, who deserves to be housekeeper to the patriarch of the Indies." At these words, this pious governante moved her eyes from me, to consider the polite person who spoke, and struck with his features, which were not altogether unknown to her, " I have (said she) a confused notion of having seen you somewhere; pray assist my recollection." " Chaste Jacinta (answered Fabricius) I am proud of having attracted your notice: I have been twice in this house, with my master Signior Manuel Ordonnez, director of the hospital." " Ha! you're in the right (replied the housekeeper) I remember it very well, and recollect your face. Ah! since you belong to Signior Ordonnez, you must be a lad of worth and honesty: your place proclaims your virtue; and this young man could not have a better recommendation. Come (added she) I will bring you to speak with Signior Sedillo, who I believe, will be very glad to have a servant of your presenting."

We followed her accordingly. The canon lodged on the ground-floor, which consisted of four rooms well wainscotted; in one of which she desired us to wait a little, while she went into the next, where the licentiate was. After she had staid with him some time, in order to give him his cue, she came and told us, that we might go in. We perceived the old goun-

tified canon buried, as it were, in an elbow-chair, with pillows under his head and arms, and his legs supported on a large down cushion. While we approached him, we did not spare bows; and Fabricius being still spokesman, not only repeated what he had said of me to the housekeeper, but likewise extolled my merit, and enlarged chiefly on the honour which I had acquired in philosophical disputes, while I was with doctor Godinez; as if it was necessary, that a canon's footman should be a profound philosopher. Nevertheless, this fine eulogium that he bestowed on me did not fail to cast a mist before the eyes of the licentiate, who observing besides, that I was not disagreeable to Dame Jacinta, said to my recommender, "Friend, I take into my service the young man whom thou hast brought. I am satisfied, and conceive a favourable opinion of his morals, since he is presented by a domestic of my good friend Signior Ordonnez."

As soon as Fabricius saw that I was engaged, he made a low bow to the canon, another still lower to the governante, and withdrew very well satisfied, after having whispered to me that we should see one another often, and that I had nothing to do but stay where I was.—When he was gone, the licentiate asked my name, and reasons for leaving my native country; and by these questions engaged me, in presence of Dame Jacinta, to recount my story. They were both very much diverted, especially with the account of my last adventure, Camilla and Don Raphael tickling them so much, that it was like to have cost the old canon his life; for while he laughed with all his force, he was seized with such a violent fit of coughing, that I imagined it would have been his last. As he had not yet made his will, you may easily guess how his housekeeper was alarmed; trembling and astonished she ran to the assistance of the good man, rubbed his forehead, and clapped him on the back, as is practised with children when they have the chin-cough. However, this was but a false alarm; the old

man

man ceased to cough, and his governante to torment him; and I would have finished my story, had not Dame Jacinta, who dreaded another fit, opposed it, and carried me out of the canon's chamber into a wardrobe, where among several suits of cloaths, was that of my predecessor. This she made me put on, and leave my own in its room, which I was not sorry to preserve, in hopes that it would still be of use to me. After which we went to prepare dinner.

I was not a novice in the art of dressing victuals, having served a happy apprenticeship under Dame Leonarda, who might have passed for a good cook: she was not, however, comparable to Dame Jacinta, who, for aught I know, would have gained the palm from the cook of the archbishop of Toledo. She excelled in every thing: her soups were exquisite, on account of her art in chusing and mixing the different kinds of gravy of which they were composed; and her hashes were seasoned in such a manner, as rendered them extremely agreeable to the palate.—When dinner was ready, we returned into the canon's chamber, where, while I laid the cloth on a table set just by his elbow-chair, the housekeeper tucked a napkin under the old man's chin, and tied it over his shoulders. In a moment after I brought in a mess of porridge, that might have been presented to the most celebrated director of Madrid; and two courses, which would have stimulated the sensuality of a viceroy, had not Dame Jacinta been sparing of her spices, for fear of inflaming the gout of the licentiate.—At sight of these delicate dishes, my old master, whom I believed impotent in all his members, shewed me, that he had not as yet lost entirely the use of his arms; he helped to disencumber himself of his pillows, and cheerfully prepared himself for eating.—Though his hand shook, it did not refuse its service, but went and came with great expedition, in such a manner, however, that it spilt upon the tablecloth and napkin one half of what was intended for his mouth—I took away the

the soup when he had done with it, and brought in a roasted partridge, flanked with two quails, which Dame Jacinta carved for him—She took care also to make him drink frequently large draughts of wine, a little diluted in a large and deep silver cup, which she held to his mouth, as if he had been a child of fifteen months.—He fell tooth and nail upon this course, and did no less honour to the birds than he had done to the porridge; and when he had stuffed himself to the tongue, the devotee untied his napkin, replaced his pillows, and left him in quiet to take his afternoon's nap in his chair; while we, having uncovered the table, went to dinner in our turn.

In this manner did our canon dine every day, who, for aught I know, was the greatest glutton of the whole chapter.—Tho' his supper was commonly more slight, consisting, for the most part, of a pullet and some preserves, I fed well in this house, and lived a very peaceable life, having only one grievance, which was no other than being obliged to watch my master, and pass the whole night like a nurse.—Besides a retention of urine, which obliged him to ask for his chamber-pot ten times in an hour, he was subject to profuse sweats, and when these happened, it was my business to shift him. “Gil Blas, (said he the second night) thou hast activity and address; and I foresee that I shall be very well pleased with thy service—I recommend to thee, above all things, to behave thyself respectfully towards Dame Jacinta: she is a wench who has served me these fifteen years with a singular zeal, and takes such care of my person, that I can never enough shew my gratitude: wherefore I own she is more dear to me than all my relations. For the love of her I have turned out of doors my nephew, my own sister's son, who paid no respect to the poor girl; and, far from doing justice to the sincere attachment she has for me, the insolent boy treated her as hypocrite; for in this age all virtue appears hypocrisy to young people.—Thank heaven!

ven! I have got rid of the scoundrel: I prefer the love that is manifested for me, to all the ties of blood, and am swayed only by the benefits I receive."—" You are in the right, sir, (said I to the licentiate) gratitude ought to have more weight with us than the laws of nature." Doubtless, (he replied) and people will see, by my last will that I have no regard for my relations. My housekeeper will have a good share, and thou shalt not be forgot, provided that thou goest on to serve me as thou hast begun. The footman, whom I turned away yesterday, has lost a good legacy by his own folly: if that poultry fellow had not, by his misbehaviour, obliged me to dismiss him, I would have made his fortune; but he was a proud coxcomb, who was deficient in his respect for Dame Jacinta; and an idle rascal; who dreaded the smallest trouble.—He, forsooth, did not love to watch over me; and looked upon it as a great fatigue to spend the night in contributing to my ease." " Ah, the wretch! (cried I, as if the genius of my friend had inspired me) he was not worthy of living with such an honourable master! A lad who has the happiness of appertaining unto you, ought to be indefatigable in his zeal: he ought to make a pleasure of his duty; and not think himself fatigued, even when he sweats blood and water for your service."

I perceived that these words were very agreeable to the licentiate, who was no less satisfied with the assurance I gave him, of being always perfectly resigned to the will of Dame Jacinta. Willing therefore to pass for a valet whom fatigue could not dispirit, I did my duty with the best grace I could assume, and never complained of being up all night; a circumstance which, however, I found very disagreeable; and had it not been for the legacy with which I fed my hopes, I should have been very soon disgusted with my condition.—Indeed I slept some hours in the day-time; and the governante, to do her justice, had a good deal of regard for me.—This must be

ascribed to the care I took in gaining her good graces by the most complaisant and respectful behaviour; when I was at table with her and her niece, whose name was Inesilla, I shifted their plates, filled wine, and served them with a most particular attention; by which means I insinuated myself into their friendship. One day, while Dame Jacinta was gone out to market, seeing myself alone with Inesilla, I began to converse with her, and asked if her father and mother were still alive. "O! not at all, (answered she) they are dead long—long ago: my good aunt told me so.—As for my own part, I never saw them." I sincerely believed the little girl, though her answer was not categorical; and put her into such a humour of talking, that she told me more of the matter than I wanted to know,—She informed me, or rather I gathered from her artless chat, that her good aunt had a very good friend, who lived likewise with an old canon, whose temporalities he managed; and that these happy domesticks expected to join the pillage of their masters by a marriage, the sweets of which they tasted beforehand. I have already observed, that Dame Jacinta, though somewhat superannuated, had still a freshness of complexion. True, indeed, she spared nothing to preserve it; for, besides a glyster, which she took every morning, she swallowed during the day, and when she went to bed, some excellent jellies of her own composing, and slept soundly all night, while I watched my master: but that which, perhaps, contributed more than any thing to preserve her colour from fading, was an issue, which Inesilla told me she had in each leg.

CHAP. II.

In what manner the canon was treated when he fell sick; the consequence of it: and the legacy which he left to Gil Blas.

I Served the licentiate Sedillo three months without complaining of the bad nights he made me pass; at the end of which time he fell sick of a fever, and felt his gout encreased by the pain which it occasioned; so that, for the first time in his life, which had been long, he had recourse to a physician, and sent for doctor Sangrado, whom all Valladolid looked upon as another Hippocrates. Dame Jacinta would have been better pleased, if the canon had begun by making his will, and even dropt some hints on the subject; but, besides that he did not believe himself near his end, in some certain things he was extremely obstinate; I therefore went in search of Dr. Sangrado, and brought him to the house. He was a tall, meagre, pale man, who had kept the shears of Clotho employed during forty years at least. This learned physician had a very solemn appearance, weighed his discourse, and gave an emphasis to his expressions: his reasoning was geometrical, and his opinions extremely singular.

After having examined the symptoms of my master's disease, he said to him, with a very physical air, "The business here is to supply the defect of perspiration, which is obstructed; others, in my place, would, doubtless, prescribe saline draughts, diuretics, diaphoretics, and such medicines as abound with mercury and sulphur; but cathartics and sudorifics are pernicious drugs, and all the preparations of chymistry are only calculated to do mischief; for my own part, I practise a method more simple, and more sure—Pray what is your ordinary diet?" "My usual food (replied the canon) is broth and juicy meat."—Broth and juicy meat! (cried the doctor, surprized)

surprized) truly, I do not wonder to find you sick : such delicious victuals are poisoned pleasures, and snares that luxury spreads for mankind, in order to ruin them the more effectually. You must renounce all palatable food : the most salutary is that which is most insipid ; for as the blood is insipid, it requires such diet as partake most of its own nature.—And do you drink wine ? (added he) “ Yes, (said the licentiate) wine diluted.” “ O ! diluted as much as you please, (replied the physician) what an irregularity is here ! what a frightful regimen ! you ought to have been dead long ago. How old are you, pray ?” “ I am going in my sixty-ninth year,” (replied the canon)—“ Right (said the physician) an early old age is always the fruit of intemperance. If you had drank nothing else but clear water all your life, and had been satisfied with simple nourishment, such as boiled apples, for example, you would not now be tormented with the gout, and all your limbs would perform their functions with ease. I do not despair, however, of setting you to rights again, provided you be wholly resigned to my directions.”

The licentiate having promised to obey him in all things, Sangrado sent me for a surgeon, whom he named, and ordered him to take from my master six good porringers of blood, as the first effort, in order to supply the want of perspiration. Then he said to the surgeon, “ Master Martin Onnez, return in three hours, and take as much more ; and repeat the same evacuation to-morrow. It is a gross error to think that blood is necessary for the preservation of life : a patient cannot be blooded too much ; for as he is obliged to perform no considerable motion or exercise, but just only to breathe, he has no more occasion for blood than a man who is asleep ; life, in both, consisting in the pulse and respiration only.” The doctor having ordered frequent and copious evacuations of this kind, he told us, that we must make the canon drink warm water incessantly ; assuring us, that wa-
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ter, drank in abundance, was the true specific in all distempers whatever. And when he went away, he told dame Jacinta and me, with an air of confidence, that he would answer for his patient's life, provided we would treat him in the manner he had prescribed. The governante, who possibly thought otherwise of his method, protested that it should be followed with the utmost exactness. Accordingly we set about warming water with all dispatch; and as the physician had recommended to us, above all things, not to be too sparing of it, we made my master drink, for the first dose, two or three pints, at as many draughts. An hour after we repeated it, and returning to the charge, from time to time, overwhelmed his stomach with a deluge of water: the surgeon seconding us, on the other hand, by the quantity of blood which he drew from him, in less than two days the old canon was reduced to extremity.

This good priest being quite spent, said to me with a feeble voice, as I presented him with a large glass of the specific, "Hold, Gil Blas, give me no more of it, my friend: I see plainly that I must die, in spite of the virtues of water; and though there is scarce a drop of blood left in my body, I don't find myself a whit the better; which is a plain proof, that the most expert physician in the world cannot prolong our days, when their fatal period is arrived: go therefore, and fetch a notary, for I want to make my will." At these last words, which I was not sorry to hear, I affected to seem melancholy, and concealing the desire I had to execute his commission, "Well, but, sir (said I) you are not yet so low, thank God, but that you may recover." "No, no, child (replied he) it is all over with me: I feel the gout mounting upwards, and death approaching. Make haste, therefore, and do as I bid thee." I perceived, sure enough, that he changed visibly, and the affair appeared so urgent, that I went out as fast as possible to fulfil his orders; leaving with him dame Jacinta,

who was more afraid than I that he would die intestate. I went into the house of the first notary I was directed to, and finding him at home, "Sir (said I) the licentiate Sedillo, my master, draws towards his end, and wants to have his last will made; so that there is not a moment to lose." The notary, who was a brisk old man, and took delight in rallying, asked what physician attended the canon; I answered, doctor Sangrado.—At that name, seizing his hat and cloak in a hurry, "Zooks! (cried he) let us make haste; for the doctor is so expeditious, that he seldom gives his patients time to send for notaries: that man has choused me out of a great many jobs."

So saying, he followed me with great eagerness, and while we walked together at a good pace, that we might arrive before he should be at the last gasp, "Sir (said I to him) you know that a testator at the point of death is apt to forget things: now, if my master should not remember me, I beg you will remind him of my zeal and attachment." "That I will, my child (replied the little notary): thou mayest depend upon me for that. I will even advise him to give thee something considerable; let him be never so little disposed to reward thy service." The licentiate, when we came into his chamber, had still the use of his senses, and dame Jacinta, who was with him, her visage bathed in tears, which she had at command, had play'd her part, and bespoke the good man's benevolence. So that she and I left the notary alone with him, and went into the antichamber, where meeting the surgeon whom the doctor had sent to make one evacuation more, we stopt him. "Hold, Mr. Martin (said the governante) you cannot go into Signior Sedillo's chamber at present; he is dictating his last will to a notary who is with him; when that is done, you shall have leave to do your office."

This pious gentlewoman and I were much afraid, that the licentiate would die before his will could be finished;

finished; but, happily for us, the deed that occasioned our disquiet, was executed; and the notary finding me in his way, as he come out, clapped me on the shoulder, saying, with a smile, "Gil Blas is not forgotten." These words inspired me with excessive joy; and I thought myself so much obliged to my master for having remembered me, that I promised to pray with all my heart for his soul, after his death, which soon happened: for the surgeon having blooded him again, the poor old man, who was but too much exhausted before, expired almost during the operation. As he breathed his last sighs, the physician came in, and looked very foolish, notwithstanding his long practice of dispatching patients. Nevertheless, far from imputing the canon's death to his watry draughts and evacuations, he observed as he went out, with an air of indifference, that the patient had not lost blood enough, nor drank a sufficient quantity of warm water. While the executioner of this sublime art, I mean the surgeon, seeing also that there was no more occasion for his office, followed Dr. Sangrado.

As soon as the breath went out of our patron's body, Dame Jacinta, Inesilla, and I, raised a concert of mournful cries, which were heard all over the neighbourhood: the governante especially, who had the greatest cause to rejoice, uttered such doleful accents that one would have thought she was the most afflicted person upon earth; and the chamber was instantly filled with people drawn thither, more out of curiosity than compassion. The relations of the deceased no sooner learned the news of his death, than they poured into the house to seal up every thing; and found the housekeeper in such affliction, that they imagined at first, the canon had not made his will: but they soon understood that there was one sanctioned by all the usual formalities; which when they came to open, and saw that the testator had disposed of his best effects in favour of Dame Jacinta and the little girl, they made his funeral speech in terms not much

to the honour of his memory : they pronounced an eulogium on the devotee at the same time, and even bestowed praises on me, who I must own deserved some at their hands : for the licentiate (rest his soul !) in order to make me remember him as long as I live, explained himself in an article of his will, with regard to me, in this manner.—“ Item, as Gil Blas is a young man of some understanding already, in order to compleat his learning, I leave to him my library, all my books and manuscripts without exception.”

I could not conceive where this pretended library could be, having never perceived any such thing in the house. I knew only of a few papers, with five or six volumes that stood upon a shelf in my master's closet, and these were my lagacy. Tho' the books could not be of any great service to me, one being intituled, *The Compleat Housewife* ; another treated of, *Indigestion and the Method of Cure* ; the rest were, *The four parts of the Breviary*, which the moths had almost consumed. With regard to the manuscripts, the most curious contained all the proceedings of a law suit in which he was once engaged, for his prebend. After having examined the lagacy with more attention than it deserved, I left it to the relations, who envied me so much. I gave them back the very cloaths I wore, and resumed my own ; claiming my wages only, as the fruit of my service ; and resolving to seek a place elsewhere. As for Dame Jacinta, besides the money which was left to her, she was in possession of some valuable effects, which, by the assistance of her good friend, she had found means to secrete, during the licentiate's last illness.

C H A P. III.

Gil Blas engages himself in the service of Doctor Sangrado, and becomes a celebrated physician.

I Resolved to visit Signior Arias de Londonna, and consult his register for a new place ; but as I was just

just going into the blind alley where he lived, I met doctor Sangrado, whom I had not seen since the death of my master, and took the freedom to salute him. He recollected me immediately, altho' I had changed my dress, and expressing some joy at seeing me, "Art thou there, my child? (said he) I was just thinking of thee; having occasion for a good lad to serve me, I imagined that thou would'st answer my purpose very well, if thou can'st read and write." "Sir, (answered I) in that particular I can do your business." "Say'st thou so! (said he) then thou art the man I want: come to my house, where thou shalt find every thing agreeable: I will treat thee with distinction; and tho' I give no wages, thou shalt want for nothing; I will take care to maintain thee handsomely; and will even discover to thee the great mystery of curing all diseases; in a word, thou shalt rather be my pupil than my servant."

I accepted the doctor's proposal, in hopes of making myself illustrious in physic, under the auspices of such a learned master; and he carried me home with him on the instant, in order to initiate me in the employment for which I was designed. This employment consisted in writing the names and places of abode of the patients who sent for him while he was abroad: for this purpose, there was in the house a register in which an old woman who was his sole domestic, set down their several directions; but besides that she was utterly ignorant of spelling, she wrote so ill, that for the most part it was impossible to decypher her scrawl. I was invested with the charge of this book, which might have been with great justice stiled a register of the dead; for almost all the people whose names it contained, gave up the ghost. I inserted in it (to use the expression,) the names of those people who were to set out for the other world, as the clerk of a stage-coach office registers those who take places. The pen was seldom out of my hand, because there was not at that time a physician

sician in Valladolid of more credit than doctor Sanguado, who had acquired great reputation with the public, by a pomp of words, a solemn air, and some lucky cures, which had done him more honour than he deserved.

He did not want practice, nor, of consequence, money, which however did not make us fare the better, his housekeeping being extremely parsimonious; our ordinary food consisting of pease, beans, boiled codlins, or cheese; which aliments (he said) were agreeable to the stomach, as being most proper for trituration, in other words, easily brayed. Notwithstanding this his opinion, however, he did not approve of our eating a belly-full even of them: in which, to be sure, he was much in the right: but if he forbid his maid and me to eat a great deal, he allowed us, by way of recompence, to drink as much water as we could swallow: far from restricting us in this particular, he would sometimes say, "Drink, my children, health consists in the suppleness and humectation of the parts: drink water in great abundance: it is an universal menstruum that dissolves all kinds of salt. When the course of the blood is too languid, this accelerates its motion; and when too rapid, checks its impetuosity." The honest doctor was so well convinced of the truth of this doctrine, that he himself drank nothing but water, though he was well stricken in years. He defined old age, a natural decay that withers and consumes us; and in consequence of this definition, deplored the ignorance of those who call "wine the milk of old men:" for he maintained that the juice of the grape wastes and destroys them; and with great eloquence observed, that this fatal liquor is to them, as to all the world, a treacherous friend and deceitful pleasure.

In spite of all this fine reasoning, I had not been eight days in the house, when I was seized with a looseness, and began to feel great disorder in my bowels, which I was rash enough to ascribe to the
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universal dissolvent and meagre subsistence on which I lived. I complained of it to my master, in hopes that he would relent and allow me a little wine at meals : but he was too much an enemy to that liquor to gratify my expectation. “ If thou feelest in thyself (said he to me) any reluctance to simple element, there are innocent aids in plenty, that will support thy stomach against the insipid taste of water ; sage (for example) and balm will give it an admirable flavour ; and an infusion of corn-poppy, gillyflower, and rosemary, will render it still more delicious.”

Notwithstanding all he could say in praise of water, and the excellent beverage he taught me to compose, I drank of it with such moderation, that perceiving my temperance, he said, “ Why, truly, Gil Blas, I am not at all surprized that thou dost not enjoy good health. Thou dost not drink enough, my friend. Water taken in small quantities serves only to disentangle the particles of the bile, and give them more activity ; whereas they should be drowned in a copious dilution : don’t be afraid, my child, that abundance of water will weaken and relax thy stomach ; lay aside that panic fear, which perhaps thou entertainest of plentiful drinking. I will warrant the consequence ; and if thou dost not look upon me as a sufficient bondsman, Celsus himself shall be thy security. That Roman oracle bestows an admirable eulogium on water, and afterwards says in express terms, that those who excuse their drinking of wine, on account of a weak stomach, do a manifest injury to that organ, by using such a cloak for their own sensuality.”

As it would not have looked well for me to shew myself intractable in the very beginning of my career in physic, I seemed persuaded of his being in the right, and will even own I was effectually convinced so that I continued to drink water on the guaranty of Celsus, or rather to drown my bile in copious draughts of that liquor ; and although I felt myself
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every day more and more incommoded by it, prejudice got the better of experience: so happily was I disposed by nature for becoming a physician. I could not always, however, resist the violence of my disorder, which increased to such a degree, that I resolved at length to leave Doctor Sangrado, but he invested me with a new employment, which made me change that resolution. "Harkee, my child, (said he one day) I am not one of those harsh and ungrateful masters who let their domestics grow grey in their service, before they recompence them. I am well pleased with thy behaviour; I have a regard for thee, and without farther delay will make thy fortune. I will immediately disclose to thee the whole extent of that salutary art which I have professed so many years. Other physicians make this consist in the knowledge of a thousand difficult sciences: but I intend to go a shorter way to work, and spare thee the trouble of studying pharmacy, anatomy, botany, and physick: know, my friend, all that is required is to bleed thy patients, and make them drink warm water. This is the secret of curing all the distempers incident to man. Yes! that wonderful secret which I reveal to thee, and which nature, impenetrable to my brethren, hath not been able to hide from my researches, is contained in these two points of plentiful bleeding and frequent draughts of water. I have nothing more to impart; thou knowest physick to the very bottom, and reaping the fruit of my long experience, art become in a twinkling as skilful as I am. Thou mayest (continued he) ease me not a little at present: in the morning thou shalt keep our register, and in the afternoon go and visit a part of my patients; while I take care of the nobility and clergy, thou shalt go in my room to the houses of tradesmen, where I am called; and when thou shalt have practised some time, I will procure thy admission into the faculty. Thou art learned, Gil Blas, before thou turnest physician, whereas others prescribe a long time,

time, generally all their lives, without ever becoming learned.

I thanked the doctor for having enabled me with such dispatch to serve as his deputy; and as an acknowledgment of his favours, assured him that I would follow his maxims as long as I lived, even if they should be contrary to those of Hippocrates.— But this assurance was not altogether sincere; for I disapproved of his opinion with regard to water, and resolved to drink wine every day when I went out to visit my patients. I committed my own cloaths to a peg for the second time, and put on a suit of my master's, that I might appear in all respects like a physician: after which I prepared myself for exercising medicine at the expence of whom it should concern.

My coup d'essai being upon an Alguazil who was ill of a pleurisy, I ordered him to be bled without mercy, and filled to the tongue with water: I went afterwards into the house of a pastry-cook, who lay roaring with the gout, and whose blood I was no more sparing of than the Alguazil's; taking care also not to restrict him in the article of water. For these prescriptions I received twelve rials, which made me so enamoured of the profession, that I thought "the more mischief the better sport." Coming out of the pastry-cook's house, I met Fabricius, whom I had not seen since the death of the licentiate Sedillo; and who having looked at me some minutes with surprize, set his hands in his sides, and burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter. It was not without reason; for having a cloak that trailed on the ground, with a doublet and breeches that would have served a man four times as big as me; my figure was truly original. I let him laugh till he was tired, not without being tempted to follow his example; but I constrained myself, in order to preserve decorum, and the better ape the physician, who is no risible animal. If my ludicrous appearance had excited the mirth of Fabricius,

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my gravity increased it; and when he had indulged it sufficiently, "Upon my conscience, Gil Blas (said he) thou art pleasantly equipt. Who the devil has disguised thee in this manner?" "Softly, friend (replied I) softly.—Learn to shew more respect for another Hippocrates; and know, that I am the deputy of doctor Sangrado, the most celebrated physician of Valladolid, with whom I have lived these three weeks. He has taught me physic to the very bottom; and as he cannot, in person, attend all the sick who send for him, I assist him in his visitation: he takes care of the great, and I of the plebeians." "Very well (replied Fabricius) he leaves the blood of the commonalty to thee, while he reserves that of the gentry to himself: I congratulate thee upon thy share; for it is better to have to do with the populace, than with persons of fashion; happy is a superb physician! his faults are less observed, and his assassination less known. Yes, my child, added he, thy situation is to be envied, and to speak in the words of Alexander, if I was not Fabricius, I could wish to be Gil Blas."

To shew the son of barber Nunnez, that he had reason to praise the happiness of my present condition, I produced the rials which I had received from the Alguazil, and pastry-cook; upon which, we went into a public-house in order to spend some of them: here we were served with pretty good wine, which the longing desire I had of tasting that liquor making me think still better than it was, I drank huge draughts of it, and (no disparagement to the Roman oracle) the more I filled my stomach, the less did that organ complain of the injury it received. Fabricius and I having staid together a long time in the public-house, and laughed heartily at the expence of our masters, as the custom is among servants, we parted in the twilight, after having made a mutual promise of meeting again in the same place next day in the afternoon.

CHAP. IV.

Gil Blas continues to act the physician with equal capacity and success.—The adventure of the ring retrieved.

I Had just got home, when doctor Sangrado came in, to whom I gave an account of the patients I had visited, and put into his hand eight rials which remained of the twelve I had received for my prescriptions. “Eight rials! (said he, after having counted them) this is a small matter for two visits; but we must refuse nothing.” So it appeared: for he kept six, and giving me two, “Hold, Gil Blas (added he) there is something for thee to begin stock: I allow thee a fourth part of what thou shalt get, and thou wilt be rich in a very short time, my friend; for please God, there will be plenty of diseases this season.”

I had reason to be contented with my share; because, resolving to detain always a third part of what I should receive from the patients, and afterwards touching a fourth of what should remain, it would on the whole (if there be any truth in arithmetic) amount to one half of what I should earn. This consideration inspiring me with new ardour for my profession, next day when I had dined, I resumed my physical dress, and going out, visited several patients whom I had registered, and whom I had treated after the same manner, though their distempers were quite different. Hitherto, things had gone smoothly on, and nobody (thank heaven) found fault with my prescriptions; but howsoever excellent the practice of physic may be, it cannot escape censure: going into the house of a grocer whose son was dropical, I there met with a little swarthy physician, called doctor Cuchillo, whom a relation of the grocer’s had brought along with him: I made profound bows to every body present, and in particular to the person who (I concluded) was called to consult with me about the distemper of the patient; he saluted me with great gravity, then eyeing me at-

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tentively for some minutes, "Signior doctor (said he) pray excuse my curiosity: I thought I had been acquainted with all my brethren the physicians of Valladolid: but I confess your features are utterly unknown to me; sure you must not have been long settled in this city." I answered that I was a young practitioner, who as yet only prescribed under the auspices of doctor Sangrado. "I congratulate you (said he bowing) on your having embraced the method of such a great man; and I do not doubt that you are already master of your business, notwithstanding your youthful appearance." He spoke this so naturally, that I did not know whether he was in jest or earnest, and I was thinking upon some answer, when the grocer interposing said, "Gentlemen, I am persuaded that you are both perfectly well acquainted with the art of physic, therefore pray examine the situation of my son, and prescribe what you shall judge proper for his cure."

Accordingly, the little doctor enquired into the state of our patient, and after having made me observe all the symptoms of the disease, asked in what manner I proposed to treat him. "I am of opinion, (said I) that he should be bled every day, and drink hot water in abundance." At these words, the little physician said with a satirical grin, "And do you think these remedies will save his life?" Never doubt that (cried I, in a resolute tone) they must certainly produce that effect, being (as doctor Sangrado observes) specifics against all kinds of distemper. "At that rate (replied he) Celsus is very much to blame, in assuring us, that for the more easy cure of a dropy, it is requisite to make the patient suffer both hunger and thirst." Oh! Celsus (I resumed) is not my oracle: he was as liable to mistakes as any other; and I have sometimes found my account in acting quite contrary to his opinion. "I perceive by your discourse (said Cuchillo) the sure and satisfactory method that doctor Sangrado would insinuate into young practitioners;

practitioners: the whole of his practice consists in bleeding and aqueous draughts; therefore, I am not at all surprized to see so many honest people die under his hands." None of your investives (said I, interrupting him in some heat) it does not look well to hear a man of your profession cast such reflections. Come, come, Mr. doctor, abundance of sick people are sent to the other world, without being blooded, or drinking hot water; and I don't doubt you have dismissed your share of them: if you have any thing to say against doctor Sangrado, commit it to paper; he will answer it, and we shall soon see on which side the laughs are. "By St. Jago and St. Dennis, (cried he, in a rage) you are little acquainted with doctor Cuchillo! Know, friend, that I have both teeth and nails, and am not at all afraid of Sangrado, who in spite of his vanity and presumption, is a downright ninny." The appearance of the little doctor making me despise his wrath, I replied with great bitterness; he answered in the same manner, and we came to fifty cuffs in a very short time: some blows passed, and each of us lost an handful of hair, before the grocer and his kinsman could part us; which when they had accomplished, I was paid for my visit and dismissed, while they retained my antagonist, who seemed to them the more skilful of the two.

After this adventure, I had like to have met with another as bad: for going to visit a fat chanter who was ill of a fever, I no sooner mentioned hot water, than he fell into a rage against the specific, cursed and swore, called me a thousand names, and even threatened to throw me out of the window. I moved off faster than I came in, and not chusing to see any more patients that day, betook myself to the house appointed for the rendezvous between me and Fabricius, who was already there: and as we found ourselves in a frolicksome humour, we drank hard,
and

and went home in a state of elevation—that is, half seas over.

Signior Sangrado did not observe that I was drunk, because he mistook my extravagant gestures, in recounting the quarrel I had with the little doctor, for an effect of the emotion occasioned by the battle: besides, having been principally concerned in our dispute, he became a party, and piqued at Cuchillo, said, “Thou hast done well, Gil Blas, in defending the honour of our remedies against that little abortion of the faculty. He affirms then, that aqueous draughts are improper for the dropsy! Ignorant wretch! I maintain—I do—that a dropsical patient cannot drink too much. Yes, water (added he) can cure all kinds of dropsies, as well as rheumatisms, and the green sickness: it is, moreover, excellent in fevers, where the patient burns and shivers at the same time; and of incredible effect, even in those distempers that are imputed to cold, serous, and phlegmatic humours: this opinion may appear strange to such raw physicians as Cuchillo: but it is easily supported by theory and practice; and if such as he were capable of reasoning philosophically, instead of decrying my method, they would become my most zealous partisans.”

He did not therefore suspect my being fuddled, so much was he enraged; for, in order to inflame him the more against the little doctor, I had thrown into my story, some circumstances of my own invention. Nevertheless, fired as he was with what I had told him, he perceived that I drank more water that evening than usual, the wine having made me very thirsty. Any other than Sangrado would have suspected my extraordinary drought, and the great draughts I swallowed; but he firmly believed that I began to relish watry potions; and said, with a smile, “I see, Gil Blas, thou hast no longer an aversion to water. Heaven be praised, thou drinkest it

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now like nectar. A change that does not surprize me at all, my friend ; for I knew that it would soon grow familiar to thy taste." " Sir (I replied) there is a time for all things : I would not at present give a pint of water for an hog'shead of wine." The doctor, charmed with this answer, did not neglect such a fair opportunity of extolling the excellence of water, but uttered a new eulogium on it, not like a cold advocate, but with all the fervour of an enthusiast. " A thousand times (cried he) a thousand, and ten times more valuable and innocent than the taverns of our days, where those baths of ages past, into which people did not go to prostitute, in a shameful manner their lives and fortune by glutting themselves with wine ; but where people met for amusement, and drank hot water with honour and security ! One cannot enough admire the wise provision of those masters of civil life, who established public places where water was freely given to all comers, and who secured the wine in the shops of apothecaries, permitting it to be used by the prescription of physicians only. What surprizing sagacity ! It is doubtless (added he) owing to some lucky remains of that antient frugality, worthy of the golden age, that there are still a few who, like thou and I, drink nothing but water ; and who, as a preservative from, or cure of all distempers, trust to hot water unboiled ; for I have observed that boiled water is more heavy, and less agreeable to the stomach."

While he uttered this excellent harangue, I had like to have laughed in his face more than once : I kept my gravity however.—I did more.—I entered into the doctor's sentiments, inveighed against the use of wine, and lamented that mankind had contracted a taste for such pernicious liquor. Then (as my thirst was not sufficiently quenched) I filled a large goblet with water, and having swallowed long draughts of it, " Come Sir, (said I to my master) let us regale ourselves with this benevolent liquor, and revive in
your

your house those antient baths which you regret so much." He applauded my zeal, and during a whole quarter of an hour exhorted me to drink nothing but water. In order to familiarize myself to this prescription, I promised to swallow a great quantity every evening; and that I might the more easily perform my promise, went to bed with a resolution of going to the tavern every day.

The opposition I met with at the grocer's house did not deter me from prescribing warm water and bleeding next day. As I came out of a house where I had been to visit a frantic poet, I met an old woman in the street, who accosting me, asked if I was a physician? when I answered in the affirmative, "Well then (said she) I most humbly beg you will come along with me; my niece was yesterday taken ill, and I don't know what is the matter with her."

I followed the old gentlewoman, who conducted me to a house, and introduced me to a pretty neat chamber, where I found a person in bed, and going towards her in order to enquire into the symptoms of her disease, was immediately struck with her features, which, when I had observed some minutes, I recollected her to be no other than the female adventurer who had so dexterously acted the part of Camilla.

END of VOL. I.

OF the ADVENTURES of GIL BLAS.

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